

A. Berenson Recd. mass. November / 97.

T H E

W O R K S //

O F T H E L A T E

M. D E V O L T A I R E.

T R A N S L A T E D F R O M T H E F R E N C H,

W I T H

N O T E S,

C R I T I C A L A N D E X P L A N A T O R Y.

B Y

The Rev. DAVID WILLIAMS.	ELIZABETH GRIFFITH.
HUGH DOWNMAN, M. A.	JAMES PARRY, M. A.
WILLIAM CAMPBELL, LL.D.	AND
RICHARD GRIFFITH, ESQ.	JOHN JOHNSON, M. A.

V O L. ⁽⁵⁾ V. //

L O N D O N:

P R I N T E D F O R F I E L D I N G A N D W A L K E R,
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AN
HISTORICAL COMMENTARY
ON
THE WORKS
OF
THE AUTHOR OF THE HENRIADE.
WITH THE ADDITION
OF MANY
ORIGINAL LETTERS.

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AN HISTORICAL
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WE shall endeavour in these commentaries on a man of letters, to say nothing that may not be of some use to literature; and above all, to make no assertions that are not founded on original papers. No use shall be made of the almost innumerable satires and panegyrics which have been published, unless they are found to be supported by authentic facts.

There are some who fix the birth of FRANCIS DE VOLTAIRE to the 20th of February, 1694; and others to the 20th of November of the same year. We have seen medals of him with each of those dates.

He has several times related to us, that at his birth it was thought that he could not live, and that having been sprinkled, the ceremony of his baptism was deferred for several months.

Although I think nothing is more insipid than the details of infancy and a school-life, yet it ought to be mentioned, from general report as well as his own writings, that at twelve years of age, having written some verses which appeared to be superior to that time of life, the Abbé Chateauneuf, an intimate friend of the celebrated Ninon de l'Enclos, introduced him to the acquaintance of that extraordinary woman, who gave him two thousand livres by her will to purchase books; which legacy was punctually paid.

The little piece in verse here alluded to, is probably that which he composed when at school, for an Invalid, who had served in the regiment of Dauphiné, under the only son of Louis XIV.

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The old soldier had gone to the Jesuits College to request one of the masters to oblige him, by writing a petition in verse, to be presented to the Dauphin. The master told him he was then too much engaged, but that he had a young scholar who could do what he wanted. The verses composed by this youth were as follows.

Digne fils du plus grand des Rois,
 Son amour et notre esperance,
 Vous qui, sons régner sur la France,
 Régnés sur le cœur des Francois ;
 Souffrez-vous que ma vieille veine,
 Par un effort ambitieux,
 Ose vous donner une étrene,
 Vous qui n'en recevez que de la main des Dieux ?
 On a dit qu'a votre naissance
 Mars vous donna la vaillance,
 Minerve la sagesse, Apollon la beauté :
 Mais un Dieu bienfaisant, que j'implore en mes peines,
 Voulut aussi me donner mes étrences,
 En vous donnant la libéralité.

O worthy first born of the best of Kings,
 Thy father's joy, his subjects future stay ;
 To thee each Frenchman's heart its tribute brings,
 Tho thou hast yet o'er France no regal sway.

Altho old age has damp'd my generous fire,
 Yet deign t'accept this gift without a frown ;
 This grateful gift, which dares thus high aspire,
 For thou receivest gifts from heaven alone.

'Tis said, their choicest influence to dispense,
 Around thy infant couch the powers combin'd ;
 Mars gave thee valour, and Minerva sense ;
 His lineaments divine Apollo join'd.

One Power Supreme, that oft' has heard my woe,
 Has deign'd, than those, a noble gift t'impart—
 He gave your eyes with pitying tears to flow,
 And to relieve distress, a generous heart.

This

This trifle of the young scholar put a few Louis-dores into the Invalid's pocket, and made some noise at Versailles and at Paris; and 'tis probable that from that moment the youth determined to follow his natural inclination for Poetry. But I have often heard him say, that what more immediately determined him to this, was his having been sent by his father (who was treasurer of the chamber of accounts) to the law-schools the moment he quitted the college, where he was so disgusted with the manner of teaching jurisprudence, that this alone made him resolve to addict himself wholly to the Belles Lettres.

Young as he was, he was admitted to an intimacy with the Abbé de Chaulieu, the Marquis de la Fare, the Duke de Sully, and the Abbé Courtin; and he has often told us that his father thought him ruined, because he kept company with people of fashion, and made verses.

At the age of eighteen, he began the tragedy of Oedipus, in which he proposed to introduce chorusses after the manner of the ancients*. The players were very unwilling to appear in a tragedy, the subject of which had been already treated by Corneille, in a performance which was the property of the managers. It was not brought on till 1718, and even then great interest was required to get it represented.

The young man, who was extremely dissipated, and immersed in all the pleasures common at his time of life, did not seem to be sensible of the risk he was exposed to, nor did he give himself any trouble about the success of his performance.

* We have a letter of the learned Dacier, dated 1713, in which he advises the author, who had then finished his piece, to add singing chorusses to it after the manner of the Greeks; but this was impracticable on the French stage.

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He played a thousand tricks on the stage, and at length wantonly laid hold of the train of the high priest, in a scene where this same high priest was producing a very tragical effect. Marshal Villars's lady, who was in the stage box, enquired who the young man was that had played that trick, which was done seemingly with a view to ruin the piece; and being told that he was the author, she sent for him into her box, and from that moment we may date his attachment to the Marshal and his lady, which continued during their lives, as may be seen by a poetical epistle, which begins in this manner:

Je me flattais de l'esperance
D'aller goûter quelque repos
Dans votre maison de plaisance;
Mais Vinache à ma confiance,
Et j'ai donné la préférence,
Sur le plus grand des Héros,
Au plus grand Charlatan de France, &c.

At Villars he was presented to the Duke de Richelieu, whose favour he soon acquired. Their friendship has subsisted uninterruptedly for sixty years.

What is as singular, and a fact but little known, is, that the Prince of Conti, the father of him who gained so much reputation by blockading Demont and Chateau Dauphin, inscribed some verses to him, the last lines of which are as follow:

“ Ayant puisé ses vers aux eaux de l'Aganippe
“ Pour son premier projet il fait le choix d'Œdipe,
“ Et quoique des longtems ce sujet fut connu,
“ Par un stile plus beau cette piece changée
“ Fit croire des Enters Racine revenu,
“ Ou que Corneille avait la sienne corrigée.”

From

AN HISTORICAL COMMENTARY. §

From Aganippé's source his strains he drew
And first in Oedipus appear'd to view;
A theme well known—yet such correctness shines,
Such easy grace adorns his polished lines;
We think Racine has left the shades below,
Or Corneille's rugged numbers learnt to flow.

I have not been able to find the answer of the author of Oedipus. I asked him one day if he did not jocosely say to the Prince, "My Lord, you will be a great poet; I must procure you a pension from the king;" and whether, as is also pretended, he did not once put this question to his Highness at supper. Are we all Princes or all poets? He replied, *Delicta juventutis meæ ne meminervis Domine.*

He began the Henriade at St. Ange, the seat of Monsieur de Caumartin, who was Intendant of the Finances. This was after he had finished Oedipus, but before that piece had been performed.

I have more than once heard him say, that when he undertook these two works, he did not imagine he should be able to finish them, and that he was neither acquainted with the rules of the drama, nor of epic poetry; but that he was fired with what he heard of Henry IV. from Monsieur de Caumartin, who was well versed in history. This respectable old man was an enthusiastic admirer of that Prince. The author used to add, that he began the Henriade from mere enthusiasm, and almost without reflection.

Having one day read several cantos of his poem when on a visit to his intimate friend, the young President de Maisons, he was so teased with objections, that he lost patience, and threw his manuscript in the fire. The president, Henaut, with difficulty rescued it. "Remember (said Mr. Henaut to him in one of his letters) it was I
" who

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“ who saved the Henriade, and that it cost me a
“ good pair of ruffles.”

Some years after, several copies of this poem were handed about, while it was only a sketch, and an edition of it with many chasms was published under the title of *The League*.

All the poets in Paris, and even many of the learned fell foul of him. Twenty pamphlets were let fly against him. The *Henriade* was played at the fair; and somebody insinuated to the old Bishop of Frejus, the King's preceptor, that it was indecent, and even criminal, to write in praise of Admiral Coligny and Queen Elizabeth.

The cabal was so powerful, that the Cardinal de Bissi, at that time president of the clergy, was requested to pass a judicial censure on the work. This strange design, however, did not take place. The young author was filled with equal surprize and resentment at these intrigues. His dissipated life had prevented him from making friends among the literati; and he had not the art of combating his intriguing enemies in their own way, which is said to be absolutely necessary at Paris, if a man wishes to succeed in any kind of pursuit.

In 1722, he brought out the tragedy of *Mariamne*. *Mariamne* was poisoned by Herod: When she drank the cup, the faction cried out, *The Queen drinks* *, and the piece was damned.

* It is an old custom in France, as well as in England, to chuse King and Queen on twelfth night, but the ceremony on this occasion is not precisely the same in both countries. In France, whenever the King or Queen raise their glasses to drink, the whole company cries out, “ *The King drinks*,” or “ *The Queen drinks*,” repeating these words with loud plaudits till they have finished drinking. It would seem therefore, that when *Mariamne* drank the cup and the audience might have been expected to be seriously affected, some ill natured wag called out, “ *The Queen*

These continual mortifications determined him to print the *Henriade* in England, as he could obtain neither privilege nor patronage for it in France. I have seen a letter in his own hand writing to Mr. Dumas d'Aiguebère, since that time counsellor in the parliament of Tholouse, in which he speaks of that journey in the following manner :

Je ne dois pas être plus fortuné
Que le Héros célèbre sur ma vielle :
Il fut proscrit, persécuté, damné
Par les devots & leur douce sequelle :
En Angleterre il trouva du secours,
J'en vais chercher——

Tho' Fortune frown, I'll ne'er complain ;
The Great have had their share of pain.
Even he, the hero of my page,
Oft' felt the malice of her rage ;
The victim of a bigot crew,
To England for relief he flew ;
I'll seek that hospitable shore——

The rest of the verses were torn. The letter ended thus : *Je n'ai pas le nez tourné à être prophète en mon pays.* “ I was never designed to be a prophet in my own country.”

He was right ; King George the First, and more particularly the Princess of Wales, afterwards Queen of England, raised an immense subscription for him. This laid the foundation of

Queen drinks,” in allusion to the custom on twelfth night ; and others, in the house, joining in the cry ; the performance was turned into ridicule.—We were the more induced to give this explanation of the expression, because in an edition of this commentary published some time ago in London, the Translator in a note on this passage considered it as wholly unintelligible to the English reader. T.

his

his fortune: for on his return to France in 1728, he put his money into a lottery established by Mr. Desforts, Comptroller General of the Finances. The adventurers received a rent charge on the *Hotel-de-Ville* for their tickets; and the prizes were paid in ready money; so that if a society had taken all the tickets, it would have gained a million of livres. He joined with a numerous company of adventurers, and was fortunate. It was one of the society who favoured us with this anecdote, and at the same time let us see the voucher of it in his register. Mr. de Voltaire wrote to him as follows: "To make one's fortune in this country, nothing more is requisite than to read the arrets of the Council. In the matter of finances the Ministry are generally obliged to make such arrangements as turn out to the advantage of individuals."

This increase of fortune did not prevent his cultivating the Belles Lettres, which were still his ruling passion. In 1730, he produced his *Brutus*, which we look upon to be the most spirited of all his tragedies, not even excepting *Mahomet*. It was exceedingly criticised.

I was present at the first representation of *Zara*, in 1731, and although it drew tears from a great part of the audience, it narrowly escaped being damned. It was parodied at the Italian comedy at the fair, and was called the *Foundlings*, or *Harlequin on Parnassus*.

About that time a member of the Academy having proposed Mr. de Voltaire to fill a vacancy, of which he did not entertain the least idea, Mr. de Boze declared that the author of *Brutus* and *Zara* could never be a fit subject for an academician.

He was then intimately acquainted with the illustrious Marchioness de Chatellet, with whom he studied

died the principles of Newton, and the systems of Leibnitz. They retired for several years to Cirey, in Champagne, two of which Mr. Kænig, a celebrated mathematician, passed with them. Mr. de Voltaire caused a gallery to be erected, where they performed all the experiments on light and electricity.

Notwithstanding these avocations, on the 27th of January, 1736, he brought out his tragedy of *Alzira, or the Americans*, which met with great applause. He ascribed his success to his absence, saying, *Laudantur ubi non sunt, sed non cruciantur ubi sunt.*

Of all the censurers of *Alzira*, the Ex-Jesuit Desfontaines was the most virulent. This affair was singular enough.—Desfontaines had been employed in the *Journal des Savans*, under the Abbé Bignon, from which he had been dismissed in 1723. He then set up a kind of Journal of his own, and was what Mr. de Voltaire calls a *Folliculaire*. His character was well known.—He had been taken in the abominable fact with some Savoyard boys, and imprisoned in the *Bissette*. His indictment was begun to be drawn up, and it was intended to burn him alive, as it was said Paris stood in need of an example. Mr. de Voltaire prevailed upon the Marchioness de Prie to use her interest in the criminal's favour.* There is still extant one of the letters written by Desfontaines to his deliverer; it has been printed among those of the Marquis d'Argens Deguille, page 228, Vol. I. "I shall never forget the obligations I lie under to you: the goodness of your heart is still

* This letter was written the 31st of May: the date of the year is seen in it, but it was written in 1724.

“superior to your genius. I ought to employ
 “my life in giving you proofs of my gratitude.
 “I conjure you likewise to obtain for me a revoca-
 “tion of the *Lettre de Cachet*, by which I am
 “delivered from the *Bissetre*, and banished thirty
 “leagues from Paris.”

Within a fortnight this same man wrote a defamatory libel against the person to whom he ought to have devoted his days. This fact is authenticated by a letter of Mr. Tiriot's, dated the 6th of August, and taken from the same collection.—This Abbé Desfontaines is the person who, in a conversation with the Count d'Argenson, attempted to vindicate himself by saying, *I must live*; to which the Count replied, *I see no necessity for it*.

After his adventure in the *Bissetre*, this Priest desisted from paying his addresses to chimney-sweepers. He bred up some young Frenchmen to his double trade of non-conformist and *Folliculaire*; he taught them how to write satires, and in conjunction with them composed a number of defamatory libels, under the titles of *Voltairemania* & *Voltaireiana*.—They were a collection of absurd stories. An idea of them may be formed from a letter written by the Duke de Richelieu, the original of which is in our possession. Here are the words: “This book is very dull and ridiculous.
 “What seems to me most extraordinary is, his
 “assertion that the Duchess de Richelieu gave
 “you an hundred Louisdors and a coach, with
 “some circumstances worthy indeed of the au-
 “thor but not of you: this strange fellow forgets
 “that I was then a widower, and did not marry
 “again till fifteen years after, &c. Signed, the
 “Duke de Richelieu, 8th February, 1739.”

Mr. de

Mr. de Voltaire made no use of all these authentic testimonies; nor would he have recalled them to his memory, even now, if we had not recovered them, with difficulty, in the chaos of his papers.

We likewise met with a letter from the Marquis d'Argenson, Minister for Foreign Affairs: "He is a villainous fellow, this Abbé Desfontains, says he, his ingratitude is still blacker than his crimes, which had given you an opportunity of obliging him." 7th February, 1739.

Such were the people with whom Mr. de Voltaire had to do, and whom he called *la canaille de la littérature, the very dregs of literature: they live, said he, upon pamphlets and iniquity.*

We likewise find that a man of the same stamp who went by the name of the Abbé M'Carty, giving himself out to be of the noble family of the M'Carty's in Ireland; and who stiled himself a man of letters; having borrowed a considerable sum from Mr. de Voltaire, went off with it to Constantinople and turned Mahometan; upon which our author said, *M'Carty is only gone to Bosphorus, but Desfontains has taken refuge further off, towards the lake of Sodom* *.

It appears that the opposition, contradiction, and abuse, which he met with at the representation of every new piece, could not make him desist from indulging his taste; for on the 10th of October that same year, he brought on his Comedy

* We have seen a bond for 500 livres in the hands of Perret the Notary, dated 1st July 1730, but we could not find the other for 2000.

of *The Prodigal Son*, though not under his own name; and he gave the profits to two young pupils whom he had formed, Messrs. Linant and Lamarre, who came to Cirey while he resided with Madame de Chatellet. Linant, thro' his recommendation, was appointed tutor to Madame de Chatellet's son, who has since risen to the rank of Lieutenant-General, and been appointed Ambassador both to Vienna and London.

The Comedy of *The Prodigal Son* had great success. The author wrote to Mademoiselle Quinaut, "You can keep other people's secrets as well as your own. Had I been known to be the author, the piece would have been damned. Men do not like to see the same person succeed in two kinds of writing. I made enemies enough by my Oedipus and Henriade."

He engaged however at that time in a study of a very different nature. He wrote *the Elements of the Newtonian Philosophy*, a philosophy then hardly known in France. He could not obtain a privilege for publishing the work from the Chancellor D'Aguesseau, who was a man of universal learning, but having been bred a Cartesian, discouraged the new discoveries as much as he could. Our author's attachment to the principles of Newton and Locke, drew upon him a new crowd of enemies. He wrote to Mr. Falkner, to whom he had dedicated his *Zara*: "The French are supposed to love novelty, but it must be in cookery and fashions, for as to new truths they are always prescribed among us; it is only when they are grown old that they are well received."

We

We have met with a letter he wrote a long time after this to Mr. Clairaut on these abstract sciences, which seems worthy of being preserved; the reader will find it in its proper place in this collection.

By way of relaxation from his philosophical studies, he amused himself by writing his *Maid of Orleans*. We have proofs that this piece of pleafantry was composed almost entirely at Cirey. Madame de Chatellet loved Poetry as much as Geometry, and was a very good judge of it. Although this Poem was altogether comic, yet there was thought to be much more invention in it than in the *Henriade*; but it was vilely disgraced by some shameless wretches, who printed it with abominable indecencies. The only good editions are those of Geneva.

He was obliged to leave Cirey to go to Brussels to solicit a law suit, which the family of Chatellet had for a long time maintained against the House of Honsbrouk, a suit which might have ruined both families. Mr. de Voltaire, jointly with Mr. Raesfeld, President of Cleves, put an end to this old dispute, on condition of an hundred and thirty thousand French livres being paid to the Marquis de Chatellet.

The unhappy and celebrated Rousseau was then at Brussels. Madame de Chatellet refused to see him, because she knew that Rousseau had written a satire against her father, the Baron de Breteuil, during the time he lived with him as a servant. We have a proof of this in a paper, the whole of which is in Madam de Chatellet's hand writing.

The

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The two Poets had an interview, and soon conceived a strong aversion for each other. Rousseau having shewn his antagonist an Ode to Posterity, the latter said to him: *My friend, this letter will never be delivered according to its direction.* This piece of raillery was never forgiven. There is extant a letter from Mr. de Voltaire to Mr. Linant, in which he says, "Rousseau despises me because I am sometimes careless in my rhimes, and for my part I despise him because he is merely a rhimer."*

* We observe by a letter of a Mr. de Médin, to a Mr. de Melle, of the 17th February, 1737, that the Poet Rousseau had not corrected his behaviour at Brussels; we here give it our readers. "You will be surprised at my misfortune—some of my bills were protested and sent back:—on Wednesday night I was arrested and thrown into gaol. Would you believe it, that rascal Rousseau, that wretch, that monster, who for these six months past has never eat or drank, but at my table, to whom I have done numberless services of the greatest importance, was the cause of my being arrested? It was he who irritated the holder of the bills against me, and at last this monster, this infernal villain, after drinking with me at my own table, and kissing and embracing me, served as a spy to the bailiffs, who dragged me from my bed at midnight. Never surely was villany so black; I cannot reflect upon it without horror.—If you knew all that I have done for him!—Patience!—I hope this accident will make no alteration in our friendship. —What a difference between that hypocrite and Mr. de Voltaire, who has honoured me with his friendship and assistance!"

It must be acknowledged that such an action tends greatly to justify Saurin, as well as the sentence and decree by which Rousseau was banished: but let us not dive into the depths of an affair so horrid and so disgraceful.

The

The extreme kindness with which the King of Prussia had been pleased to honour him, soon made him forget Rousseau's enmity. That Monarch was likewise a poet; but he possessed all the talents of a Prince, with many others which are seldom found in that sphere of life. A regular correspondence had been long carried on between him and our author, when he was Hereditary Prince Royal. Some of their letters have been printed in the collection of Voltaire's works.

This Prince had just finished visiting his frontiers, after his accession to the Crown, when a desire of seeing the French troops, and of traveling incognito to Strasbourg and Paris, induced him to undertake a journey to the first of those places, under the name of the Count du Four; but being discovered by a soldier who had served in his father's army, he returned to Cleves.

Many curious persons have preserved in their collections, a letter in verse and prose, after the manner of Chapelle, written by that Prince on the subject of his journey to Strasbourg. The study of the French language and poetry, Italian music, philosophy and history, had been his consolation under the uneasiness he had experienced in his youth.

That letter is a remarkable production from a man who has since gained so many battles. It is written with elegance and ease. Here follow some passages of it:

"I am just returned from a journey, which
 "has offered many singular adventures; some-
 "times disagreeable and very often entertain-
 "ing."

"You

“ You know that I sat out for Brussels, in order to pay a visit to a sister for whom I entertain an equal affection and esteem.—On the road, Algarotti and I consulted the map in order to settle our return by Wesel.—Strasbourg was not much out of our way, and in preference we made choice of that route. It was resolved to travel incognito;—at length every thing being arranged and concerted in the best manner possible, we thought of reaching Strasbourg in three days.

“ Mais le ciel qui de tout se dispose
 “ Regala différemment la chose.
 “ Avec des coursiers efflanqués,
 “ En droite ligne issus de Rossinanté,
 “ Des payfans en postillons masqués,
 “ Nos carrosses cent fais dans la route accrochés,
 “ Nous allions gravement d’une allure indolente, &c.”

But all-disposing Fate, that day,
 In different order plan’d our way.
 With beasts which by their flanks and speed,
 Seem’d of the true La Mancha breed,
 Our drivers taken from the plough,
 And coaches sunk in every slough,
 With solemn pace we trudg’d along, &c.

It is said that scarce a day passed in which he did not write some of these agreeable letters, which were the extempore effusions of his pen. But he had just finished a work of a more serious nature and more worthy of a great Prince; it was a refutation of Machiavel. He had sent it to Voltaire to get it printed, and had appointed to meet him at Meuse, a little castle in the neighbourhood of Cleves;—when they met, our author said to him,

“ Sire,

“ Sire, had I been Machiavel, and allowed access to a young King, I should have begun with advising him to refute my works.”

From that time the King of Prussia redoubled his favours to Mr. de Voltaire, who in the year 1740, went to pay his court to him at Berlin before the King was prepared for entering Silesia.

At that time Cardinal Fleury used every flattering method to cajole him, but it does not appear that our traveller was in any way a dupe to his artifices.—We shall here present our readers with a very singular anecdote relating to this subject, which may throw great light on the history of the present century. On the 14th of November, 1740, the Cardinal wrote a long ostensible letter, of which we have a copy, in which are the following words:

“ Corruption is so general, and sincerity and truth are so shamefully banished from every heart in this unhappy age, that unless we keep ourselves steady to the principles which inculcate the observance of them, we should be sometimes tempted to deviate from them on certain occasions. But the King, my master, shews at least that he does not suppose himself entitled to reprisals of this kind; and the moment he heard of the Emperor’s death, he assured the Prince of Lichtenstein, that he would faithfully keep all his engagements.”

It is not my business to examine how it was possible, after such a letter, to form a plan in 1741, for depriving the daughter of the heiress of Charles the Sixth of her possessions. Either Cardinal Fleury changed his opinion, or that was entered into without his consent. This com-

mentary has no connexion with politics, to which I am an absolute stranger; but as a literary man I cannot conceal my surprise at seeing a Courtier and Academician write, *That unless we keep ourselves steady to the principles which inculcate the observance of those principles, we should be tempted to deviate from those principles and that we are therefore intitled to this sort of reprisals.* Here are great errors in style in the compass of a very few words.

It plainly appears, however, that our author had no desire to make his fortune by politics; for on his return to Brussels, he devoted himself wholly to his beloved Belles Lettres. It was there he composed the tragedy of Mahomet, and soon after went with Madame de Chatellet to get it represented at Lille, where there was a very good company, under the management of Mr. Lanoue, who was an author as well as an actor. The famous Mademoiselle Clairon played there, and even then gave specimens of the greatest theatrical talents.

Madame Denis, our author's niece, who was married to a Commissary at war (who had formerly been a Captain in the regiment of Champagne) lived at that time in a splendid manner at Lille, which was within her husband's department.—Madame de Chatellet resided in her house; I was present at all those diversions; Mahomet was extremely well played.

Between the acts, the author received a letter from the King of Prussia, acquainting him with the victory at Molwitz: he read it to the audience, who received the news with a general clap. “*You will see, said he, that this piece of Molwitz will insure success to mine.*”

It

It was acted at Paris, the 19th of August, the same year. It was then that stronger proofs than ever were given of the excess to which the jealousy of authors may be carried, especially in theatrical matters. The Abbé Desfontains, and one Bonneval, whom Mr. de Voltaire had relieved in his necessities, not being able to prevent the piece from succeeding upon the stage, lodged an information against it before the Attorney-General, as containing some things contrary to the Christian religion. Things went so far, that Cardinal Fleury advised the author to withdraw his performance. This advice was equivalent to a command; however, the author published his play, with a dedication to the Pope Benedict XIV. (Lambertini) who had already shewn him particular marks of regard. He had been recommended to this Pope by Cardinal Passionei, a man of great reputation in the literary world, and with whom he had long maintained a correspondence. We have several of that Pope's letters to Mr. de Voltaire. His Holiness was desirous of drawing him to Rome, and he has always expressed a regret at not having seen that city, which he used to stile the capital of Europe.

Mahomet was not played again till long after, and then it was brought on through the interest of Madame Denis, notwithstanding the efforts of Crebillon, who was at that time licenser of theatrical pieces, by the direction of the Lieutenant of the Police. It was found necessary to appoint M. d'Alembert licenser. This behaviour of Crebillon was exceedingly censured by people of fashion. The piece has continued in possession of the theatre ever since, and even at a time when

that species of entertainment has been the most neglected. The author acknowledged that he was sorry he had painted Mahomet in more odious colours than he deserved. But had I only made him a hero and politician, says he in a letter to one of his friends, the piece would have been damned. Great passions and great crimes are indispensable requisites in a tragedy. Some lines after he adds, the *genus implacabile vatum* persecutes me more violent than Mahomet was persecuted at Mecca. People talk of jealousies and intrigues disturbing courts, but they abound more among men of letters.

After all these disputes, Messrs. de Reaumur and de Mairan advised him to renounce poetry, which only exposed him to envy and vexation; to addict himself entirely to natural philosophy, and to solicit a seat in the Academy of Sciences, as he already had one in the Royal Society of London, and in the Institution of Bologna. But his friend M. de Fourmont, a man of letters, and of a most amiable character, having exhorted him in a poetical epistle not to neglect his talent, he returned the following answer :

Amon très cher ami Fourmont,
Demeurant sur le double-mont,
Au-dessus de Vincent Voiture,
Vers la taverne où Bachaumont,
Buvait et chantait sans mesure,
Où le plaisir & la raison
Ramenaient le tems d'Epicure.

Vous voulez donc que des filets
De l'abstraite Philosophie
Je revole au brillant palais

De

De l'agréable Poësie,
 Au pays où règnent Thalie
 Et le cothurne and les fifflots.

Mon ami, je vous remercie
 D'un conseil si doux & si sain.
 Vous le voulez ; je cède enfin
 A ce conseil, à mon destin ;
 Je vais de folie en folie,
 Ainsi qu'on voit une Catin
 Passer du Guerrier au Robin.
 Au gras Prieur d'une Abbaye
 Au Courtisan, au Citadin :

Ou bien, si vous voulez encore,
 Ainsi qu'une abeille au matin
 Va sucer les pleurs de l'aurore
 Ou sur l'absinte ou sur le thim ;
 Toujours travaille & toujours cause ;
 Et vous paîtrist son miel divin,
 Des gratte-cus & de la rose.

So then, my dearest friend, Fourmont,
 (Who 'rt near the tavern, on the hill
 Above Voiture's, where Bachaumont
 In mirthful hours, was wont to fill
 The sparkling cup, in boundless measure ;
 And giving loose to sober pleasure,
 While thus inspired by heav'nly Bacchus,
 Revived the days of of Epicurus)
 You wish to see me quit the gloom,
 Of abstruse study's sober mien :
 And where poetic flow'rets bloom,
 And Thalia courts, again be seen.

Indeed, my friend, you well advise,
 Your counsel seems right, sound and wise ;
 So I'll resume an occupation
 Which truly suits my inclination.
 Fate will'd I ever should be changing,
 From folly still to folly ranging.

So

So does some easy fair admit
 A powder'd lord, or humble cit;
 Or flies from an holy Prior's arms
 To give some trooper all her charms,
 Or if you chuse a different strain,
 So when Aurora gilds the plain,
 The bee imbibes the dew drop sweets,
 And settles on each flower she meets;
 Unwearied plies her busy wings,
 And as she works incessant sings:
 Busy t'increase her honey'd store,
 Alike from weed or fragrant flower.

And immediately he began his *Merope*. The tragedy of *Merope*, which is the first piece, not upon a sacred subject, that has succeeded without the aid of an amorous passion, and which procured our author more honour than he hoped from it, was played on the 26th of February, 1743. I cannot give the reader a better idea of the singular circumstances attending its reception, than by inserting his letter of the 4th of April following, to his friend Mr. D'Aiguebère, then at Thoulouse.

" *Merope* is not yet printed: I am afraid it
 " will not be received so well in the closet as on the
 " stage.—The success of the piece was not due to
 " me, but to Mademoiselle Dumenil.—What
 " think you of an actress who kept the au-
 " dience in tears through three successive acts?
 " —The public have run into a little mis-
 " take, and given me credit for a part of
 " the extreme pleasure given them by the
 " actors. The seduction was so great, that
 " the pit, with loud shouts insisted upon see-
 " ing

“ ing me.* I was seized in the hiding place,
 “ where I had taken shelter, and brought by force
 “ into Madame de Villars box, who was there
 “ with her daughter-in-law.—The pit was mad;
 “ they called out to the Duchess de Villars to
 “ kiss me, and they made so much noise, that she
 “ was obliged to comply by order of her mother-
 “ in-law.—Thus have I been kissed in public, as
 “ was Alain Chartier, by the Princess Margaret of
 “ Scotland; but he was asleep, and I was wide
 “ awake. This tide of popular favour, which
 “ probably will soon ebb, has a little consoled
 “ me for the petty persecution I have sustained
 “ from Boyer, the old Bishop of Mirepoix, who
 “ is still more a Theatin than a Bishop. The
 “ Academy, the King, and the Public, destined
 “ me to succeed Cardinal Fleury, as one of the
 “ forty †. Boyer was against it; and at last,
 “ after ten weeks search, he has found a Prelate
 “ to fill the place of a Prelate, in conformity
 “ to the Canons of the Church ‡. I have not
 “ the honour to be a priest; I believe it will be
 “ proper for a *profane* person as I am, to give up
 “ all thoughts of the Academy.

* Hence the ridiculous custom of crying ‘ the author,’ ‘ the author,’ when a piece, whether good or bad, succeeds the first night.

† The French Academy, which is not to be confounded with the Academy of Sciences, consists of *forty* members, who are generally persons of very high rank or of great literary reputation. It was instituted during the ministry of Cardinal Richelieu, for the improvement of the French Language. T

‡ We have seen a letter from the Archbishop of Narbone, dated March the 3d, 1743, in which that Prelate gives up his pretensions in favour of Mr. de Voltaire.

“ Literature

“ Literature is not much favoured. The
 “ Theatin once told me that eloquence was ex-
 “ piring; that he endeavoured in vain to restore
 “ it by his sermons, but that nobody had *seconded*
 “ him; he meant to say, nobody had *listened* to
 “ him.

“ The Abbé Langlet is just imprisoned in the
 “ Bastille for having published a book of Me-
 “ moirs, already well known, which are intended
 “ as a supplement to the history of our celebrated
 “ de Thou. The indefatigable and unfortunate
 “ Langlet did a signal service to all who wished
 “ well to their country, and to the lovers of his-
 “ torical researches. He merited a reward; whereas
 “ at the age of sixty-eight he has been cruelly
 “ thrown into prison. This is tyrannical.

Inferre nunc Milbæ puros; pone ordine vites.

“ Madame de Chatellet begs her compliments
 “ to you. She is going to marry her daughter to
 “ the Duke de Montenero, a dwarfish Neopoli-
 “ tan, who has a large nose, with a thin swarthy
 “ complexion, and is at the same time flat chested.
 “ —He is now here, and going to rob us of a
 “ fine plump-cheeked French girl.—*Vale et me*
 “ *ama.*”

V

Soon after this we find him taking another jour-
 ney to the King of Prussia, who was always in-
 viting him to Berlin, but could never prevail on
 him to quit his old friends for any considerable
 time. In this journey he performed a singular
 service to the King his master, as we see by the
 letters which passed between him and Mr. Amelot,
 the Minister of State. But these particulars come
 not

not within our present design.—We consider him only in his literary character.

The famous Count de Bonneval, who was become a Turkish Pacha, and whom he had seen formerly at the house of the Grand Prior of Vendome, wrote to him about this time from Constantinople, and their correspondence continued some time, but no part of it has been recovered except a single fragment which we shall transcribe.

“ No saint, before me, was ever given up to
 “ the discretion of Prince Eugene. I was sensible that it would be somewhat ridiculous in
 “ me to submit to circumcision: I was soon
 “ assured, however, that I should be excused
 “ from undergoing that operation, on account of
 “ my advanced age; but I was still withheld by
 “ the ridiculousness of changing my religion. (It
 “ is true that I have always thought it a matter
 “ of indifference to the Deity, whether a man
 “ was Mussulman, Christian, Jew, or Guebre)
 “ I have always entertained on this subject the
 “ opinion of the Regent Duke of Orleans, the
 “ Duke de Vendome, my dear friend the Marquis
 “ de la Fare, the Abbé de Chaulieu, and all the
 “ men of sense with whom I have passed my life.
 “ I knew well enough that Prince Eugene thought
 “ as I did, and that he would have done the
 “ same thing in my situation. In a word, I was
 “ reduced to the alternative of losing my head,
 “ or covering it with a turban. I communicated
 “ my perplexity in confidence to Lamira, a domestic of mine, my interpreter, whom you
 “ have since that time seen in France with *Said*
 “ *Effendi*. This man brought me an *Iman*, who

E

“ had

*fire me
whisper*

“ had more knowledge than the generality of his
 “ countrymen. Lamira presented me to him as
 “ a Catechumen, whose faith was very wavering.
 “ Here is what this good priest dictated to him
 “ in my presence;—Lamira translated it into
 “ French;—I shall preserve it as long as I live.
 “ Our religion is indisputably the most ancient
 “ and the purest in the known world: ’tis the
 “ religion of Abraham, without the least mixture,
 “ and this is confirmed by our holy Koran, where
 “ it is said, *Abraham was a true believer; he was*
 “ *neither Jew, nor Christian, nor Idolater.* Like
 “ him, we believe in only one God, like him we
 “ are circumcised, and we consider Mecca as a
 “ holy city, only because it was revered as
 “ such even in the time of Ishmael, son of Abra-
 “ ham.

“ God hath certainly poured his blessings on
 “ the race of Ishmael, for his religion has spread
 “ over the greatest part of Asia and Africa; and
 “ the race of Isaac has not been able to preserve
 “ an inch of ground in either of them.

“ It is true, that our religion is perhaps a
 “ little mortifying to the flesh; Mahomet has
 “ restrained the licentiousness in which all the
 “ Asiatic Princes indulged themselves;—that of
 “ having an undeterminate number of wives.
 “ The Princes of the abominable sect of the Jews
 “ had carried this licentiousness farther than any
 “ others: David had eighteen wives; Solomon,
 “ according to the Jews, had seven hundred; our
 “ Prophet reduced the number to four.

“ He has forbidden the use of wine and strong
 “ liquors, because they disorder both the mind
 “ and the body, occasion diseases and quarrels,
 “ and

“ and because it is much easier to abstain from
 “ them altogether, than to keep within bounds.

“ But what renders our religion more especially
 “ holy and admirable, is its being the only one
 “ which makes alms-giving an essential duty.
 “ Other religions recommend charity, but we
 “ expressly command it, under pain of eternal
 “ damnation.

“ Our religion is likewise the only one which
 “ forbids games of chance, and under the same
 “ penalties, which proves the profound wisdom
 “ of Mahomet. He knew that gaming rendered
 “ men incapable of business, and but too often
 “ transformed society into an assemblage of dupes
 “ and knaves.

*In this part of the letter there are several lines so
 blasphemous that we dare not copy them. They may
 be excusable in a Turk, but a Christian cannot trans-
 scribe them.*

“ If then this Christian has a mind to abjure
 “ his idolatrous sect, and embrace that of the
 “ victorious Mussulmen, he has only to pronounce
 “ our holy formulary in my presence, to repeat
 “ the prayers, and perform the ablutions which
 “ are prescribed.

“ Lamira having read this writing to me, he
 “ said, These Turks, my Lord, are not such fools
 “ as they are said to be at Vienna, Rome, and
 “ Paris.—I replied, That I felt an inward im-
 “ pulse of Turkish grace, which flowed from a
 “ firm hope, that I should be able to repay
 “ Prince Eugene when I should have the com-
 mand of a few Turkish battalions.

“ I pronounced the formulary word for word,
 “ after the Iman: *Alla illa allah: Mohammed resoul*

“ *allah*. They then made me repeat the prayer,
 “ which begins with these words; *Benamyezdam*
 “ *Bakshaeier dadar*, in the name of the just and
 “ most merciful God, &c.

“ This ceremony was performed in the presence
 “ of two Mussulmen, who went immediately to
 “ relate it to the Pacha of Bosnia. While they
 “ were gone on this errand, my head was shaved,
 “ and the Iman covered it with a turban, &c.”

I might add some songs of the Count Pacha to this curious fragment, but, though his verses are very lively, they are not so interesting as his prose.

I have nothing to say of the year 1744, except that our author was received into almost all the Academies in Europe, and what is singular, into that of *La Crusca*. He had carefully studied the Italian language, as may be seen by an eloquent letter written to him by Cardinal Passionei, which begins with these words:

“ I have read your charming and learned Italian
 “ letter over and over again, and always with
 “ new pleasure. It is difficult to conceive how
 “ a man, who possesses such a fundamental know-
 “ ledge of other languages, should have been able
 “ to acquire such perfection in this.

“ The remark which you make in your letter
 “ upon the errors of the greatest men, comes
 “ very apropos; for the sun has his spots and
 “ eclipses, which are mentioned in the most
 “ trifling almanacks; and as you very properly
 “ observe, they who censure too severely, have
 “ often greater need of our indulgence than those
 “ whom they reprove. Homer, Virgil, Tasso,
 “ and several others, can lose but little by a slight
 “ and

“ and trifling fault which is covered with a
 “ thousand beauties ; but the Zoiluses will be
 “ ever ridiculous, and incapable of distinguishing
 “ the pearls from the rubbish of Ennius.”

This Cardinal wrote, as the reader may perceive, almost as well in French as in Italian, and thought very judiciously. Our Zoiluses did not escape him.

Mr. de Voltaire, about the close of the year 1744, received a brevet, appointing him Historiographer of France, which he considered as a magnificent trifle. He was already known by his History of Charles XII. which has passed through so many editions. This history was chiefly composed in England, when he was in the country with Mr. Frabricius, (Chamberlain to George I. King of England, and Elector of Hanover) who had lived seven years with Charles XII. after the battle of Pultowa.

In the same manner the *Henriade* was begun at St. Ange, from his conversations with Mr. de Caumartin.

That history was much praised for its stile, and as much criticised for the incredibility of its facts : but the criticisms ceased, and the facts were credited the moment King Stanislaus sent to the author, by the hands of the Count de Treffan, a Lieutenant-General, an attestation couched in the following terms :

“ Mr. de Voltaire has neither forgotten nor
 “ misplaced a single fact or circumstance ; all is
 “ truth and properly arranged. He has spoken
 “ of Poland and all the events which happened
 “ there, as if he had been an eye witness.

“ Given at Comercy, 11th July, 1759.”

As

As he had got the title of Historiographer, he was not willing to be inactive in his new office, and to have that said of him which was once said of Racine and Boileau by a Clerk of the Treasury, *We have as yet seen nothing of these gentlemen but their signature.* He wrote his History of the War of 1741, which was then in all its force; you will find it in his Age of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. †

He was then at Etiole, with the charming Madame d'Etiole, who was afterwards Marchioness of Pompadour. The Court gave orders for some grand festivals, which were to take place in the beginning of the year 1745, when it was intended to marry the Dauphin to the Infanta of Spain. They desired to have ballets with singing music, and a kind of comedy, which should connect the songs. It was given in charge to our author, although he had no taste for this kind of entertainment. He chose the story of a Princess of Navarre for his subject. The piece was written superficially. Mr. de la Popeliniere, one of the Farmers-General, but a man of letters, introduced some airs, and the music was composed by the famous Rameau.

Madame d'Etiole at that time obtained the appointment of Gentleman in Ordinary of the Chamber for Mr. de Voltaire. It was a present worth about sixty thousand livres, and the more pleasing, because he obtained the singular favour of being permitted to sell this employment and to preserve the title, privileges, and functions of it.

† It has been printed separately, and ridiculously falsified.

Few people know the little *impromptu* he made upon this favour's being granted him, without his having asked for it twice.

Mon Henri quatre et ma Zaire,
Et mon Américaine Alzire
Ne m'ont volu jamais un seul regard du Roi.
J'avais mille ennemis avec très peu de gloire ;
Les honneurs & les biens pleuvent enfin sur moi,
Pour une Farce de la Foire.

Neither my Henry nor Zara,
Or my American Alzira,
Could e'er attract my Sovereign's care,
Tho critics strove to blast my name ;
But now I've rais'd both wealth and fame,
By writing farces for the fair.

Nevertheless, a pension of two thousand livres had been granted him by the King long before this, and one of fifteen hundred by the Queen, but he never asked for payment.

History being now, as it were, his duty, he began the outlines of his Age of Louis XIV. but did not persist in it. He wrote the Campaign of 1744, and the memorable Battle of Fontenoy ; entering into the whole detail of that important action. In this poem even the number of the killed in each regiment is mentioned. The Count d'Argenson, Secretary at War, communicated to him all the officers letters. Marshal de Noailles and Marshal Saxe entrusted him likewise with their papers.

I believe it will give singular pleasure to those who wish to know men and events, if I transcribe a letter which the Marquis d'Argenson, Minister for foreign affairs, and eldest brother to the Secretary

cretary at War, wrote to Mr. de Voltaire from the field of battle. It is as follows.

“ Mr. Historian, the news on which you
 “ so heartily congratulate us, without doubt
 “ reached you on Wednesday evening. A page
 “ set out from the field of battle on Tuesday,
 “ at half past two o’clock, to carry the dis-
 “ patches, and I am told that he reached Ver-
 “ failles on Wednesday evening at five o’clock.
 “ It was a glorious sight to see the King and the
 “ Dauphin writing upon a drum, surrounded by
 “ the conquerors and the conquered, the dead,
 “ the dying, and the prisoners. I made the fol-
 “ lowing remarks :

“ I had the honour of meeting the King on Sun-
 “ day near the field of battle. When I got to the
 “ camp from Paris, I was told that the King was
 “ gone to take an airing. I immediately procured
 “ a horse and came up to his Majesty near a place
 “ which was in view of the enemy’s camp. I
 “ then learnt for the first time, what his Ma-
 “ jesty’s intentions were, and I never saw a man so
 “ cheerful as he was upon the occasion. Our
 “ conversation turned precisely on a point of his-
 “ tory that you have discussed in four lines ;—
 “ which of our Kings gained the last royal bat-
 “ tle? and I assure you that his courage did not
 “ wrong his judgment, nor his judgment his me-
 “ mory. We then went to lie down upon straw ;
 “ —never was there a ball-night more gay, or
 “ so many *bon-mots*. We slept all the time,
 “ which was free from the interruptions of Cou-
 “ riers and Aids-de-camp. The King sung a
 “ very droll song of several verses. As for the
 “ Dauphin, he went to the battle as to a hare hunt-
 ing,

“ ing, and almost said, What! is this all? A
 “ cannon-ball struck in the clay, and bespattered a
 “ man near the King.—Our masters laughed very
 “ heartily at the person that was spattered. One
 “ of my brother’s grooms, who was behind the
 “ company, was wounded in the head with a
 “ musket ball.

“ What is true and certain, and without flat-
 “ tery, is, that the King gained the battle by
 “ his own steadiness and resolution. You will
 “ see different accounts and details of this mat-
 “ ter. You will be told of a terrible moment in
 “ which we saw a second edition of Dettingen,
 “ where the French were prostrated before the
 “ firmness of the English. Their rolling fire
 “ which resembled the flames of hell, did I con-
 “ fess stupify the most unconcerned spectators,
 “ and we began to despair for the state.

“ Some of our generals, who have more heart
 “ and courage than abilities, gave very prudent
 “ advice.—They dispatched orders all the way to
 “ Lisle;—they doubled the King’s guard;—they
 “ had every thing packed up, &c. The King
 “ laughed at all this, and going from the left to the
 “ center, asked for the corps-de-reserve, and the
 “ brave Lowendahl; but there was no occasion.
 “ A charge was made by a sham corps-de-reserve,
 “ consisting of the same cavalry which had al-
 “ ready made an unsuccessful attack, the King’s
 “ household, the carabineers, those of the French
 “ guards who had not advanced, and the Irish
 “ brigade, who are excellent troops, especially
 “ when they march against the English and Ha-
 “ noverians. Your friend, Mr. de Richelieu, is
 “ another Bayard; it was he who gave and put
 F into

34 AN HISTORICAL COMMENTARY.

“ into execution the advice to attack the infantry
 “ like hunters or foragers, pell-mell, the hand
 “ lowered, the arm shortened, masters, servants,
 “ officers, cavalry, infantry, all together. No-
 “ thing can withstand this French vivacity which
 “ is so much spoken of, and in ten minutes the
 “ battle was gained by this unexpected stroke.
 “ The heavy English battalions turned their
 “ backs upon us; and, in short, there were
 “ fourteen thousand of them killed.*

“ The heavy artillery had indisputably the
 “ honour of this terrible slaughter;—there never
 “ were so many or such large cannon fired in one
 “ battle, as at the battle of Fontenoy. There
 “ were no less than a hundred. It would seem,
 “ Sir, as if the poor enemy had willingly per-
 “ mitted every thing to reach the army that
 “ could be destructive to them; the cannon from
 “ Douay, the gens-d’armes, and the musketeers.

“ There is one anecdote which happened at the
 “ last attack I spoke of, and which I hope will
 “ not be forgotten. The Dauphin, from a natural
 “ impulse, drew his sword in the most graceful
 “ manner, and insisted upon charging; but he
 “ was requested to desist. After all, to mention
 “ the bad with the good, I observed a habit too
 “ easily acquired, of looking with tranquillity on
 “ the dying and the dead, and on the reeking
 “ wounds which were every where to be seen on
 “ the field of battle. For my part, I own that
 “ my heart failed me, and that I stood in need of
 “ a cordial, I attentively observed our young

* There were indeed fourteen thousand men missing at the muster, but about six thousand of them returned the same day

“ heroes,

“ heroes; who seemed too indifferent upon this
 “ head.—I am fearful that this inhuman carnage
 “ may encrease this disposition in them in the
 “ course of a long life.

“ The triumph is the finest thing in the world.
 “ —God save the King; hats in the air and upon
 “ bayonets; the compliments of the Sovereign
 “ to his troops; visiting the entrenchments;
 “ villages; and redoubts; joy, glory, and ten-
 “ derness;—but the ground of the picture is hu-
 “ man blood, and fragments of human flesh.

“ At the end of the triumph, the King
 “ honoured me with a conversation on the sub-
 “ ject of peace, and I have dispatched some cou-
 “ riers.

“ The King was much entertained yesterday
 “ in the trenches;—they fired a good deal at
 “ him, but he remained there three hours. I
 “ was employed in my closet, which is my trench,
 “ for I confess to you I have been much retarded
 “ in business by all these dissipations. I trem-
 “ bled at every shot I heard fired. I went the
 “ day before yesterday to see the trenches, but I
 “ cannot say there is any thing curious in them
 “ in the day time. We shall have *Te Deum* sung
 “ to day under a tent, and there will be a general
 “ *feu de joie* of the whole army, which the King
 “ will go to see from Mount Trinity;—it will be
 “ very fine.

“ Adieu; present my humble respects to Ma-
 “ dame du Chatellet.”

This was the same Marquis d'Argenson, whom
 some trifling courtiers used to call the blockhead
 d'Argenson. This letter proves him to have been
 of an agreeable turn of mind, and possessed of a

humane heart. They who knew him intimately, saw more of the philosopher than the politician in him, but chiefly valued him for his being an excellent citizen. He may be judged of by his book, entitled *Considerations upon Government*, printed in 1764, by Marc Michel Rey. See what he says in his chapter *on the sale of offices*. We cannot resist the pleasure of quoting some few passages.

“ It is astonishing that a book which is called
 “ The Political Testament of Cardinal de Riche-
 “ lieu, should have met with such general appro-
 “ bation. It is the work of some pedantic eccle-
 “ siastic, and unworthy of the great genius to
 “ whom it has been ascribed, were it not for the
 “ chapter in which the sale of offices is anathema-
 “ tized. A wretched invention, which has been
 “ productive of infinite mischief, the remedy for
 “ which, though most indispensably necessary, is
 “ almost become impracticable; for it would re-
 “ quire the whole revenues of the state only to re-
 “ imburse the principal officers, who do the greatest
 “ harm.”

This important passage seems to have foretold, at a distance, the abolition * of this shameful venality, which took place in 1771, to the astonishment of all France, who looked upon such a reformation as impracticable. In the above passage we discover an uniformity of opinion with Mr. de Voltaire, who has shewn the absurd errors which abound in the libel, that has been so ridiculously ascribed to Cardinal de Richelieu; and who has wiped away from the memory of that able and respectable minister, the stain with

* This abolition in 1771, was only transitory.

which

which his name was disgraced, by having such an impertinent work ascribed to him.

Let us likewise transcribe a part of the picture which the Marquis d'Argenson has given us of the wretchedness of the peasants.

“ To begin with the King ; the higher one’s
 “ rank is at court, the more difficult it was to per-
 “ suade one’s self of the wretchedness of the
 “ country people. The nobility who have great
 “ possessions in the country, sometimes hear a
 “ good deal said upon the subject, but their hard
 “ hearts feel nothing in these miseries but the
 “ diminution of their rents. They who come
 “ from the country, affected with what they have
 “ seen, very soon forget it, when immersed in the
 “ luxuries of the capital. *We must have steady*
 “ *minds and tender hearts to be able to preserve*
 “ *compassion for objects at a distance.*”

That truly patriotic minister had always a tender friendship for Mr. de Voltaire, from his infancy. We have seen a great deal of their correspondence ; and the consequence was, that the Secretary of State employed the man of letters in several important affairs during the years 1745, 1746, 1747, which is probably the reason we have no theatrical pieces of our author’s composition during that period.

We observe by his papers that the secret of the proposed descent upon England, which was undertaken in the year 1746, was entrusted to him. The Duke of Richelieu was to have commanded the army. The Pretender had gained two battles, and a revolution was expected. Mr. de Voltaire was directed to draw up a Manifesto on this occasion, which we have copied from his own minutes.

MANIFESTO

MANIFESTO OF THE KING OF FRANCE IN
FAVOUR OF PRINCE CHARLES EDWARD.

“ The most serene Prince Charles Edward
“ having landed in Great Britain, without any
“ assistance but his own personal courage, and all
“ his actions having procured him the admira-
“ tion of Europe, and the hearts of every true
“ Englishman, the King of France joins in the
“ same sentiments. He esteems it his duty at
“ the same time, to assist a Prince who is worthy
“ of inheriting the throne of his ancestors, and
“ a generous people, of whom the worthier part
“ have joined in recalling Prince Charles Stewart
“ to his country. He sends the Duke de Riche-
“ lieu at the head of his army, because the Eng-
“ lish, of the purest intentions, have solicited
“ this assistance; and he sends only the precise
“ number of troops which have been demanded,
“ because he will be ready to withdraw them as
“ soon as the English nation shall require it.
“ His Majesty, in affording this just assistance to
“ his relation, the descendant of so many Kings,
“ and a Prince so worthy of a crown, takes
“ this step jointly with the people of England,
“ only with a view to restore peace to them and
“ all Europe, from a persuasion, that it will have
“ the desired effect; being perfectly convinced,
“ that the most Serene Prince Edward relies on
“ the good will of the people, and looks upon
“ the support of their liberties, laws, and hap-
“ piness, as the great purpose of all his under-
“ takings; and, lastly, because the greatest
“ Kings of England have been those, who, bred
“ like him in adversity, have merited the love
“ and esteem of the nation.

“ It

“ It is in these sentiments that the King assists
 “ their Prince, the son of him who was born the
 “ lawful heir of three kingdoms, a warrior, who
 “ comes to throw himself into their arms, and
 “ notwithstanding his valour, expects nothing
 “ from them and their laws, but a confirmation
 “ of his most sacred rights : who never can have
 “ a separate interest from theirs, and whose vir-
 “ tues have at length softened the hearts that were
 “ the most prejudiced against his cause.

“ He hopes that such an opportunity will re-
 “ unite two nations that ought mutually to
 “ esteem each other ;—who are naturally con-
 “ nected by their commercial wants, and ought
 “ to be so on this occasion, by the interests of a
 “ Prince who deserves the good will of all man-
 “ kind.

“ The Duke de Richelieu commanding the
 “ army of his Majesty the King of France ad-
 “ dresses this declaration to all the faithful ci-
 “ tizens of the three kingdoms of Great Britain,
 “ and assures them of the constant protection of
 “ the King his master. He is come to join the
 “ heir of their ancient Kings, and like him to
 “ shed his blood for their service.”

We may perceive by the expressions in this piece, what were the sentiments of esteem and inclination, which the author had at all times entertained for the English nation, and in which he has always persisted.

It was the unfortunate Count Lally who projected the plan of this descent, which was afterwards laid aside. He was born in Ireland, and detested the English as much as our author loved and esteemed them. We have so often heard Mr. de Voltaire say, this hatred was a violent passion

passion in Lally, that we cannot help testifying our astonishment at that General's having since been accused of betraying Pondicherry to the English. The decree which condemned him to be put to death, is one of the most extraordinary sentences which has been given in our time, and was a consequence of the misfortunes of France. This example, and that of the Marshal de Marillac, plainly shew that whoever is at the head of armies or the affairs of state, is seldom sure of dying in his own bed, or in the bed of honour.

It was in the year 1746 that Mr. de Voltaire was admitted into the French Academy. He was the first who deviated from the insipid custom of filling their inaugural discourses with nothing but the praises of Cardinal Richelieu. He embellished his oration with new remarks upon taste, and upon the French language. They who have been admitted since his time, have generally adopted and improved this useful practice.

In 1748, he accompanied Madam de Chatellet to the court of King Stanislaus at Luneville, where he composed the comedy of *Nanine*, which was played on the 17th of July in that year. It did not succeed well at first, but some time after it had a very considerable and continued run. I can ascribe this whimsicalness of the public only to the secret desire of humiliating a man who has too much reputation; but after a time their inclination gives way to their pleasure.

The same thing happened at the first representation of *Semirimis* on the 29th of August of the same year, 1748, but at length it succeeded better on the stage than either *Merope* or *Mahomet*..

One

One thing, which by the bye I consider as very extraordinary, is, that he did not make himself known as the author of a panegyric on Louis XV. which was printed in 1749, and translated into Latin, Italian, Spanish and English.

The disorder which had so much alarmed the public for the life of Louis XV. and the battle of Fontenoy, which occasioned still greater fears for the King and the nation, rendered the work very interesting. The praise which the author bestowed in it was authorized by facts, and there was a certain philosophical turn in it, which characterizes whatever has come from his hands. This composition was as much the panegyric of the officers as of Louis XV. yet he did not present it to any one, not even to the King. He well knew that he did not live in the age of Pellisson. He wrote to his friend Mr. Fourmont :

Cet éloge a très peu d'effet
Nul mortel ne m'en remercie
Celui qui le moins s'en soucie.
Est celui pour qui je l'ai fait.

That panegyric few men read,
And fewer still its author heed :
He whom I chiefly strove to raise,
Seems least affected by my praise.

In this same year, 1749, he was again on a visit to King Stanislaus at Luneville, with the Marchioness du Chateller; that illustrious lady died there. The King of Prussia at that time gave Mr. de Voltaire an invitation to come and live with him. I find that it was not till towards the end of the month of August, 1750, and after he had combated for more than six months

the opinions of all his friends, who strongly dissuaded him from going, that he resolved to quit France, and attach himself to his Prussian Majesty for the rest of his life. He could not withstand the letter which the King of Prussia wrote to him the 23d of August, from the apartments destined for his future guest in the palace of Berlin: a letter which has been so often printed and so generally read.

“ I have seen the letter which your niece wrote
 “ to you from Paris. The friendship she expresses
 “ for you, commands my esteem. If I were
 “ Madame Denis, I should think as she does;
 “ but being what I am, I think otherways. I
 “ should be miserable if I thought myself the
 “ cause of making my enemy wretched; how
 “ then can I desire the unhappiness of the man
 “ whom I love and esteem, and who for my sake
 “ has given up his country, and all that has been
 “ thought dear among men? No, my dear Vol-
 “ taire, if I could foresee that your removal to
 “ this country could in the smallest degree be dis-
 “ advantageous to you, I should be the first to
 “ dissuade you from it. Yes, I prefer your hap-
 “ piness to the excessive pleasure I should have in
 “ your company. But you are a philosopher, and
 “ so am I; what can be more natural, more sim-
 “ ple or reasonable, than that two philosophers
 “ who were formed to live together, who are
 “ united by the same studies, and who have the
 “ same taste, and the same manner of thinking,
 “ should enjoy that satisfaction?

“ I respect you as my master in eloquence and
 “ learning, and I love you as a virtuous friend.
 “ What slavery, what unhappiness, what change,
 “ what inconstancy of fortune have you to dread
 “ in

" in a country where you are as highly valued as
 " in your own, and with a friend who has a
 " grateful heart? I have not the foolish pre-
 " sumption to think Berlin equal to Paris. If
 " riches, grandeur, and magnificence, make a
 " city agreeable, Berlin must yield to Paris. If
 " there is a particular place to be found in the
 " world, where fine taste more generally prevails
 " than in every other, I know, and allow it is
 " Paris: but do not you carry that taste with you
 " wherever you go? We have powers sufficient
 " to praise your merits, and as to sentiment, we
 " will not yield to any country upon earth. I
 " respected the friendship which attached you to
 " Madame du Chatellet, but after her, I am one
 " of your oldest friends. What! because you
 " consent to retire to my house, shall it be said
 " that that house becomes your prison? shall I
 " become your tyrant because I am your friend?
 " I confess to you I do not understand this kind
 " of logic; I am firmly persuaded that you will
 " be very happy here, as long as I live: you
 " will be looked upon as the father of letters,
 " and of men of taste; and you will find every
 " comfort in me, which a man of your merit can
 " expect from one who values him. Good-
 " night.

" FREDERIC."

The King of Prussia, after this letter, asked
 the consent of the King of France by his Minister
 at that court; the King of France readily granted
 it. Our author was presented at Berlin with the
 Order of Merit, the key of Chamberlain, and a
 pension of twenty thousand livres. However, he
 did not give up his house at Paris, and I find by

44 AN HISTORICAL COMMENTARY.

the accounts of Mr. Delaleu, the Notary, that Mr. de Voltaire was at an expence of thirty thousand livres a year there. He was attached to the King of Prussia by the most respectful regard, as well as by a conformity of taste. He has a hundred times said, that that Monarch was as amiable in company, as he was formidable at the head of an army; and that he never had more agreeable supper parties even at Paris, than those to which that Prince was pleased constantly to admit him. His regard for the King of Prussia rose to a degree of enthusiasm. His apartments were immediately under the King's, and he never quitted them but to go to supper. The King composed his works in philosophy, history, and poetry, in the upper, while his favourite cultivated the same arts and the same talents in the lower apartments. They communicated their works to one another. The Prussian Monarch wrote his Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg at Potsdam, and the French author having carried his materials with him, wrote his Age of Louis XIV. at the same place. Thus did his days glide along in a tranquillity enlivened by such agreeable employments.

In the mean time his *Orestes*, and *Rome Preserved*, were performed at Paris. *Orestes* was brought on about the end of the year 1749, and *Rome Preserved* in 1750. These two pieces, like his *Merope* and *the Death of Cæsar*, are entirely free from any love affair. He wished to purge the stage of every thing which is not calculated to excite the emotions proper to tragedy. He considered *Eleëtra* in love as a monster dressed in dirty ribbons; and this sentiment he has expressed in several of his works,

We

We have met with a letter of his in verse,
which he sent to the King of Prussia with his
manuscript of Orestes.

Grand juge, & grand feseur de vers,
Lisez cette œuvre dramatique,
Ce croquis de la scène antique
Que des Grecs le pinceau tragique
Fit admirer à l'univers ;
Jugez si l'ardeur amoureuse
D'une Electre de quarante ans.
Doit dans de tels événements
Etaler les beaux sentiments
D'une heroine douceuse
En massacrant ses chers parents
D'une main peu respectueuse.

Une princesse en son printemps,
Qui surtout n'aurait rien à faire,
Pourrait avoir par passe-tems
A ses pieds un ou deux amants
Et les tromper avec mystere.
Mais la fille d'Agamemnon
N'eut dans la tête d'autre affaire
Que d'être digne de son nom,
Et de venger le roi son père.
Et j'estime encore que son frère
Ne doit point être un Céladon,
Ce héros fort atrabilaire
N'était point né sur le Lignon.
Apprenez moi mon Apollon
Si ja'i tort d'être si sévère,
Et lequel des deux doit vous plaire
De Sophocle ou de Crebillon.
Sophocle peut avoir raison,
Et laisser des torts à Voltaire.

O thou, with ev'ry talent grac'd,
The poet's fire, the critic's taste,
T' accept this humble off'ring deign,
Faint copy of the Grecian scene,
Whose muse with magic pencil drew
What distant ages raptur'd view.

When

When forty years had cool'd the blood,
 And still'd youths' warm tumultuous flood,
 Say, if Electra, fill'd with hate,
 Urging their guilty mother's fate,
 Ought in a puling girlish strain
 Of love's soft tortures to complain
 Or when engaged in such affairs,
 Coquet it with fantastic airs ;
 A princess blest with youth and leisure,
 Whose only business is her pleasure,
 Tis true, may play off all her arts
 To captivate unguarded hearts,
 Draw lovers to her feet with smiles,
 And cheat them by mysterious wiles.
 Far different was Electra's aim ;
 To shield the glories of her name,
 T'avenge her fire, her bosom burn'd,
 All meaner cares she proudly scorn'd :
 Nor should Orestes idly wail,
 Or fighting, tell an am'rous tale ;
 For not by Lignon's past'ral stream
 Did that fierce hero chaunt love's theme,
 His soul the mad'ning furies stung,
 And fellest rage his bosom wrung.
 Now, my Apollo, deign to say
 If I have chose the proper way,
 To whom the prize you chuse t'award,
 Crebillon, or the Grecian bard :
 Unfollied, Sophocles may shine,
 And all the faults be counted mine.

It must be acknowledged, that nothing could
 be more agreeable than this kind of life, or do
 more honour to philosophy and literature. This
 happiness would have been more lasting, and
 would not have given place to a still greater hap-
 piness, had it not been for a dispute on a subject
 of mathematical philosophy, which arose between
 Maupertuis, who likewise lived at that time with
 the King of Prussia, and Koenig, librarian to the
 the

the Princess of Orange, at the Hague. This dispute was a continuation of that which for a long time had divided the mathematicians about the living and dead powers. It cannot be denied but that a little quackery gets into this subject; as well as in theology and medicine. The question at any rate was very trifling, for let them entangle it as much as they will, they must always return to the plain laws of motion. The dispute grew serious, and Maupertuis got the Academy at Berlin, which he managed as he pleased, to condemn Kœnig's opinion in the year 1752, on the authority of a letter of the late Leibnitz, without being able to produce the original of that letter, which however had been seen by Mr. Wolff. He did more than this—he wrote to the Princess of Orange, to request her to dismiss Kœnig from his employment of Librarian; and represented him to the King of Prussia, as a man who had been wanting in the respect due to his Majesty. Voltaire, having passed two whole years at Cirey with Kœing, who was his intimate friend, thought it was his duty openly to espouse his cause.

The quarrel became violent, and the study of philosophy degenerated into faction and cabal. Maupertuis was at some pains to have it reported at court, that one day when General Manstein happened to be in Voltaire's apartments, who was then translating into French, *The Memoirs of Russia*, composed by that officer, the King sent some of his verses as usual for his inspection, and that Voltaire said to Manstein, *Let us leave off for the present, my friend, you see the King has sent me his dirty linen to wash; I will wash your's another time.* A single word is sometimes sufficient to ruin a
man

man at court; Maupertuis imputed such a word to Voltaire, and succeeded.

It was about this very time that Maupertuis published his very strange Philosophical Letters, in which he proposed to build a Latin city; to sail in quest of discoveries directly under the Pole; to make a hole to the center of the earth;—to go to the Streights of Magellan, and dissect the brains of a Patagonian, in order to investigate the nature of the soul;—to cover the bodies of the sick with pitch in order to prevent the danger of perspiration; and above all, not to pay the physician.

Mr. de Voltaire heighthened these philosophical ideas with all the pleasantry which so fine an opportunity afforded, and unfortunately the learned all over Europe were amused with the ridicule. Maupertuis was careful to join his own cause to the King's; and this piece of pleasantry was looked upon as a failure in respect to his Majesty. Our author in the most respectful manner returned the key of Chamberlain, and the cross of his order to the King, with the following verses.

“ Je les reçus avec tendresse ;
 “ Je vous les rend avec douleur,
 “ Comme un amant jaloux, dans sa mauvaise humeur,
 “ Rend le portrait de sa Maîtresse.”

These once with pleasure I receiv'd,
 But now return with pain ;
 His mistress' picture, inly griev'd,
 Thus yields the jealous swain.

The King sent back to him the key and ribbon. Our author then sat out to pay a visit to her Highness the Duchess of Gotha, who constantly

stantly honoured him with her friendship till her death. It was for her that he wrote *The Annals of the Empire*, about a year after; a work which was entirely new modelled in his *Essay on the History of Genius and Manners of Nations*.

While he remained at Gotha, Maupertuis employed all his batteries against our traveller, which he was made sensible of when he came to Francfort on the Mayne, where his niece, Madame Denis, had appointed to meet him.

An honest German, who neither loved the French nor their verses, came to him on the first of June, and in bad French demanded the works in *poeshie* of the King his master. Our traveller replied, that the works in *poeshie* were with the rest of his effects at Leipzig. The German gave him to understand, that he would not be suffered to leave Francfort till these works arrived. Mr. de Voltaire gave him his Chamberlain's key and his cross, and promised to restore what was demanded from him: upon which the messenger signed the following note:

“ S I R,

“ So soon as the large bale from Leipzig shall
“ be here, where is the work of *poeshie* of the
“ King, my master, you may depart wherever
“ you think proper.

“ Francfort, 1st June, 1753.”

The prisoner wrote at the bottom of the note,
Good for the work of poeshie of the King, your master.

But when the verses arrived, it was pretended there were some bills of exchange expected, which did not arrive.—The travellers were detained fifteen days at the sign of the Goat, on account of

H

these

these pretended bills; and at last were not permitted to depart without paying a considerable ransom. These are details which never come to the ears of Kings.

This adventure was very soon forgotten by both parties, and with great propriety. The King sent back his verses to his old admirer, and soon after a considerable number of new ones. It was a love quarrel;—the bickerings of a court soon die away; but a laudable ruling passion will long continue. Our French traveller, on reading over again that eloquent and affecting letter of the King's, which we have transcribed, felt his former tenderness return, and exclaimed, *After such a letter I must certainly have been greatly in the wrong.*

The Berlin fugitive had a little estate in Alsace, in the territories of the Duke of Wirtemberg; and thither he went, and amused himself with printing his *Annals of the Empire*, which he made a present of to John Frederic Shoëflin, bookseller at Colmar, and brother to the celebrated Schoëflin, Professor of History at Strasburgh. This bookseller's affairs were much out of order, and Mr. de Voltaire lent him ten thousand livres. Upon this occasion I cannot help expressing my astonishment at the meanness of so many scribblers, who have asserted that he made an immense fortune by the continual sale of his works.

While he was at Colmar, Mr. Vernet, a French refugee, and minister of the gospel at Geneva, and Messrs. Cramer, respectable citizens of that famous city, wrote to him, requesting him to come and print his works there. The two brothers, who were considerable booksellers, were preferred, and he gave his works to them in the same manner
he

he had done to Mr. Shoëflin, that is to say, in a present. He then went to Geneva with his niece, and his friend Mr. Coligny, who had acted as his secretary, and who has since been secretary and librarian to the Elector Palatine.

He purchased a pretty country-house for life near that town, the neighbourhood of which is extremely agreeable, and where there is the finest view in Europe. He bought another at Lausanne, and both of them upon condition that a certain sum should be returned him when he quitted them. It was the first instance of a Roman Catholic getting an establishment in these Cantons, since the times of Zuinglus and Calvin.

He likewise purchased two estates in the *Pays de Gex*, about a league from Geneva. His principal residence was at Ferney, of which he made a present to Madame Denis: it was a feignory, which had been absolutely free from all duties to the King and from every kind of impost since the time of Henry IV. There are not two estates in all the other provinces of the kingdom which enjoy similar privileges; the King confirmed these privileges to him by a warrant. It was to the Duke de Choiseul, the worthiest and most generous of men, he owed this favour, though he had not the honour of being personally known to him.

The little *Pays de Gex* was at this time almost a savage desert. Fourscore ploughs had been laid aside ever since the revocation of the edict of Nantz; half the country was a continued morass, which spread infection and disease. Our author's ambition was to settle in some forsaken Canton, and to raise it to a flourishing condition. As we advance nothing without authentic proofs, we shall transcribe one of his letters to the Bishop of

Annecy, in whose diocese Ferney is situated. We cannot discover the date of the letter, but it seems to have been written in the year 1759.

"SIR,

"The curate of the little village of N—, in the neighbourhood of my estate, has commenced a suit against my vassals at Ferney, and having frequently left his cure to carry it on at Dijon, he easily overpowers the farmers who are wholly employed in labour for their daily support. He charges them fifteen hundred livres costs of suit, and has the cruelty to include in those costs the expences of the journeys he has taken on purpose to ruin them. You, Sir, know better than I, how the Popes in the early ages of the church were incensed against the clergy who sacrificed to temporal affairs that time which should have been devoted to the service of the altar. But if they had been told that a Priest came with officers of justice to extort money from poor families, to oblige them to part with the only meadow which they had to feed their cattle in, and to take the milk from their children, what would the Ireneuses, the Jeroms, and the Augustins have said? This, Sir, is what this Curate has done at the gate of my castle. I sent to let him know that I would pay the greatest part of what he exacted from my tenants, but he answered that that would not satisfy him.

"You will, no doubt, sigh at the thoughts of any Pastors of the true church setting such horrid examples, while there is not a single instance of a Protestant Clergyman having entered

“ entered into a law-suit with his * parishioners
 “ about money matters, &c. †”

This letter, and the event of that affair, may suggest some useful reflections. Mr. de Voltaire put an end to the process, and the whole affair, by paying the claims which oppressed his poor tenants out of his own pocket; and this wretched district very soon changed its appearance.

He extricated himself more pleasantly out of a dispute in the Protestant country, where he had two very agreeable possessions, the one at Geneva, which is still called the House of Delights, and the other at Lausanne.

It is sufficiently known how dearly he loved liberty; to what degree he hated persecution, and with what horror he at all times looked upon those hypocritical wretches who, by the most dreadful punishments, dared, in the name of God, to destroy those whom they accused of differing from them in sentiment. It was upon such occasions that he used sometimes to repeat,

*Je ne decide, entre Genève & Rome.
 I decide not between Geneva and Rome.*

* What occasions the Protestant Clergy never to have any suits with their flocks, is their being paid their salaries by the states. They have no dispute with miserable wretches about their eighth or tenth sheaf. The Empress Catherine has taken the same method in her immense dominions, where the plague of tythes is unknown.

† M. de Voltaire seems to have had in his eye here the clergy of Geneva and the Protestant Canton—We wish the truth of his observation was equally well established in every Protestant country, but alas! here in England, there are too many Rectors, who like the litigious Curate, his neighbour, live in a state of warfare with their parishioners on the subject of tythes. T.

Cnc

One of these letters, in which he observed that the Picard, John Chauvin (called Calvin) who was truly the assassinator of Servetus, *had a diabolical heart*, having been made public by an indiscretion which is but too frequent, some bigots were offended, or pretended to be offended, at the expression. A Genevese of the name of Rival, who was a man of genius, addressed the following lines to him upon that occasion :

Servet eut tort, & fut un sot
 D'oser dans un siècle salot
 S'avouer antitrinitaire. *
 Et nôtre illustre atrabilaire
 Eût tort d'employer le fagot
 Pour réfuter son adversaire.
 Et tort nôtre antique sénat
 D'avoir prêté son ministère
 A ce dangereux coup d'état.
 Quelle barbare inconséquence!
 O malheureux siècle ignorant !
 Nous osions abhorer en France
 Les horreurs de intolérance
 Tandis qu'un zèle intolérant
 Nous faisait bruler un errant !
 Pour nôtre prêtre épistolaire
 Qui de son petulant effort
 Pour exhaler sa bile amère
 Vient réveiller le chat qui dort,
 Et dont l'inepte commentaire
 Met au jour ce qu'il eût du taire
 Je laisse à juger s'il a tort.
 Quant à vous célèbre Voltaire
 Vous eutes tort, c'est mon avis.

* Servetus might have relied on Calvin's own words, who says in one of his works, *in case any one is heterodox, and scruples at the words trinity and person, we do not believe there is sufficient reason for rejecting that man, &c.*

Vous vous plaîsez dans ce pais
 Fêtez le saint qu'on y révère.
 Vous avez à satieté
 Les biens où la raison aspire ;
 L'opulence, la liberté,
 La paix, (qu'en cent lieux on désire)
 Des droit à l'immortalité.
 Cent fois plus qu'on ne saurait dire.
 On a du goût, on vous admire,
 Tronchin * veillie à vôtre santé.
 Cela vaut bien en vérité
 Qu'on immole a sa sûreté.
 Le plaisir de pincer sans rire.

When bigot zeal each breast inspir'd,
 Servetus' brain, with frenzy fir'd,
 The three in one denied ;
 Calvin himself, illustrious name !
 As madly by the faggot's flame,
 To prove his doctrine tried.

Our ancient senate madly lent
 Its power to work the dire event,
 And lighted up the pile ;
 What barb'rous inconsistency reign'd,
 Unhappy age, in darkness chain'd !
 Misled by fatal guile.

Our fires with chilling horror view'd
 The French in brother's blood embu'd,
 And tears suffus'd their eyes.
 While Persecution's livid brand
 Blaz'd dreadful o'er our guilty land,
 And lo ! a wanderer dies.

* Dr. Tronchin, a celebrated Genevese Physician, and an intimate friend of Mr. de Voltaire. He now resides at Paris, in the palace of the Duke of Orleans, to whom he is first Physician. T.

Our priest, who by his letters strives
 To purge his gall, and now revives
 The so long dormant rage,
 Whose comments, what from public sight
 Ought to be hid, draw forth to light,
 Who'll take him for a sage?

For you, Voltaire, so highly fam'd,
 You too seem justly to be blam'd.
 Since here you choose to stay,
 Honour the saint whom we revere,
 Your acrimonious censures spare
 And choose the safer way.

What reason asks, what fortune show'rs,
 Peace, riches, liberty are yours,
 And never dying fame,
 High in her radiant temple shrin'd,
 Your brow with every wreath entwin'd,
 Her trump resounds your name.

We too have taste, your works we prize,
 And friendly Tronchin's anxious eyes
 Your health incessant guard;
 These blessings sure are worth the while
 The joy to pinch without a smile,
 May wisely then be spar'd.

Our Author replied to these agreeable verses by
 the following:

Non, je n'ai point tort d'oser dire.
 Ce que pensent le gens de bien.
 Et le sage qui ne craint rien
 A le beau droit de tout écrire.

J'ai quarante ans bravé l'empire
 Des lâches tirans des esprits.
 Et dans votre petit païs
 J'aurais grand tort de me dedire.

Je

Je fais que souvent le malin
A caché sa queue & sa griffe
Sous la tiare d'un Pontife
Et sous le manteau de Calvin.

Je n'ai point tort quand je deteste
Ces assassins religieux
Employant le fer & les feux
Pour servir le Père céleste.

Oui, jusqu'au dernier de mes jours
Mon ame sera fière & tendre,
J'oserais gémir sur la cendre
Et des *Servets* & des *Dubourgs**.

De cette horrible frénésie
A la fin le tems est passé;
Le fanatisme est terrassé,
Mais il reste l'hipocrisie.

Farceurs à manteaux étriqués,
Mauvaise musique d'Eglise,
Mauvais vers & sermons croqués,
Ai-je tort si je vous meprise?

The sage, whose calm intrepid soul
No fears or dangers can controul,
The truth may freely write;
And while I plead fair Virtue's cause,
Striving t'enforce her sacred laws,
I'm surely in the right.

The wretches that enslave the mind,
And reason in vile setters bind,
Full long I've made my foes;
Nor shall your petty state restrain
My pen, or teach me how to seign,
I'll still their rage oppose,

* Dubourg, Counsellor and Clerk of the Parliament, was created at Paris, as Servetus was at Geneva.

Beneath the triple crown conceal'd,
 And under Calvin's cloak oft' veil'd,
 Lurks man's malignant foe;
 Infidious hides his claws and tail,
 More sure thus shrouded to prevail,
 And work us greater woe.

A virtuous hate my bosom fires,
 And all her warmth my breast inspires:
 I feel a sacred joy,
 Those holy murd'ers when I blame,
 Who, in our heavenly father's name,
 The sword and fire employ.

'Till every pulse forget to play
 I still will urge my destin'd way,
 Nor swerve through dastard fear;
 O'er Dubourg's and Servetus' urn
 With undistinguish'd pity mourn,
 And pour the pious tear.

But now those dreadful times are o'er,
 Such frantic rage we see no more,
 Fanaticism's fled;
 Hypocrisy, with sullen gloom,
 Has now usurp'd the vacant room,
 And triumphs in her stead.

Ye mummers, who with sermons dull,
 Vile hymns, worse music, strive to gull
 The gaping idiot throng:
 Your starch'd stiff air, your formal cloak,
 I still shall make my standing joke,
 And who can say I'm wrong?

We may perceive by this answer, that he was neither of Apollos, nor of Cephas, and that he preached toleration to the Protestant as well as to the Roman churches. He always said, that it was the only way to make life tolerable, and that he would be content to die, if he could establish these maxims in Europe. It may be said that he
 has

has not been altogether mistaken in his design, and that he has contributed not a little to render the clergy, from Geneva to Madrid, more gentle and humane, and above all to open the eyes of the laity.

Being persuaded that the representations of dramatic works of genius, contributed as much to soften savage manners, as the exhibitions of the gladiators formerly did to harden them, he built an handsome little theatre at Ferney, and notwithstanding his bad state of health, sometimes played himself; his niece, Madame Denis, who possessed uncommon talents for elocution, as well as for music, acted several characters there. Mademoiselle Clairon, and the famous Lekain, performed in some pieces on that stage, and people came from the distance of twenty leagues to hear them. He has more than once had suppers of a hundred covers, and balls; but notwithstanding his advanced age, and the appearance of a life of dissipation, he never discontinued his studies. On the 20th of August, 1755, he brought his *Orphan of China* upon the stage at Paris, and *Tancred* on the third of September, 1760. Mademoiselle Clairon, and Mr. Lekain, displayed all their powers in these pieces.

The *Coffee-house*, or the *Scotchwoman*, a comedy in prose, though not intended for the stage, was likewise brought on that year, and met with great success. He amused himself in composing this piece to chastise the *Folliculaire** Freron, whom he mortified, but did not correct. This comedy, translated into English by Mr. Colman†, had as

* The reader will recollect the application of this term in a former part of this volume. T.

† Under the title of the *English Merchant*.

great a run at London as at Paris. These works took no time; the *Scotchwoman* was written in eight days, and *Tancred* in a month.

It was in the midst of these employments and amusements, that Mr. Titon du Tillet, who had formerly been master in ordinary of the Queen's household, and who was now eighty-five years of age, recommended to him a grand-daughter of the great Corneille, who being altogether without a fortune, was forsaken by the whole world. It was this same Titon du Tillet, who being a great lover of the fine arts, without cultivating them, caused a figure of Mount Parnassus to be constructed in bronze, at a considerable expence, in which are seen the statues of several French poets and musicians. This monument is in the King of France's library. He had bred up Mademoiselle Corneille in his own house, but seeing his fortune spent, he could do no more for her, and imagined that Mr. Voltaire would take care of a young lady of so respectable a name. Mr. du Mallard, a member of several Academies, known by a learned and judicious dissertation on the ancient and modern tragedies of *Electra*, and Mr. Le Brun, Secretary to the Prince of Conti, united with him in writing to Mr. de Voltaire. He thanked them for the honour they had done him in casting their eyes upon him, and observed, *that it was no more than the duty of an old soldier, to serve the grand-daughter of his General.* The young lady came to his country house of *Delices*, near Geneva, in 1760, and from thence to his castle at Ferney. Madame Denis most chearfully undertook to finish her education, and at the end of three years Mr. de Voltaire married her to Mr. Dupuis of the *Pays de Gex*, a Captain, and since that time a Field Officer

Officer of Dragoons. Beside the portion which he gave them, and the pleasure he had in keeping them to live with him, he proposed to write a commentary on the works of Peter Corneille, for the benefit of his descendant, and to print them by subscription. The King of France was pleased to subscribe eight thousand livres, and some other sovereign Princes followed the example. The Duke de Choiseul, whose generosity is so well known, the Duchess de Grammont, and Madame de Pompadour, subscribed considerable sums. Mr. de la Borde, the King's Banker, not only took a number of copies, but occasioned so great a number to be sold, that by his zeal and liberality he was the principal founder of Mademoiselle Corneille's fortune; so that in a little time she had fifty thousand livres for a wedding present.

In the course of this rapid subscription a singular circumstance occurred on the part of Madame de Geoffrin*, a lady of celebrated wit and merit, who had been executrix to the famous Bernard de Fontenelle, the nephew of Peter Corneille. Mr. de Fontenelle, unfortunately had forgotten this relation, who not being presented to him till too short a time before his death, was dismissed, along with her father and mother, as impostors who had assumed the name of Corneille. Some friends, affected with the fate of this unfortunate family, but extremely indiscreet, and ill-informed, commenced a rash prosecution against Madame de Geoffrin, and found a Coun-

* This lady, who owed her reputation more perhaps to her great fortune and munificence than her genius, died in 1777, at Paris, aged 78. She is mentioned by Lord Chesterfield in his Letters to his Son. T.

fellor,

sellor, who, abusing the privileges of the bar, published a very scurrilous case against this lady, Madame de Geoffrin, who was most unjustly attacked, gained her cause unanimously. Notwithstanding the bad treatment she had met with, she had the generosity to forget it, and was the first to subscribe a considerable sum.

The Academy as a body, the Duke de Choiseul, the Dukes de Grammont, Madame de Pompadour, and a number of the nobility, gave Mr. de Voltaire a power to sign the contract of marriage for them. This is one of the events which reflect the greatest honour on literature.

While he was making preparations for this marriage, which has proved very happy, he enjoyed another pleasing satisfaction, by being the means of assisting six young gentlemen, who were almost all of them minors, in the recovery of their paternal estate, which had been purchased by the Jesuits at a very shameful price. It will be right to give the particulars of this affair from the beginning.—It is the more interesting, as it began before the famous bankruptcy of the Jesuit Lavallette and Company, and in a manner was the first signal of the suppression of the Jesuits in France.

The Messieurs Deprez de Crassi were six brothers of an ancient and noble family in the *Pays de Gex*, on the borders of Switzerland, and all in the King's service. One of them, who was a Captain in the regiment of Deux-Ponts, in conversation with his neighbour, Mr. de Voltaire, gave him an account of the sad condition of the family estate. This estate, which was of considerable value, and might have proved a resource

to

to them, had been a long time mortgaged to some people at Geneva.

The Jesuits had purchased some lands adjoining to it, in a place called Ornex, to the amount of about two thousand crowns a year. To this new acquisition they wanted to join the estate of the Messieurs de Crassi. The Superior of the Jesuits, whose real name was *Fesse*, which he had changed to *Fessi*, settled matters with the Genevese creditors, so as to purchase the lands. He procured leave of the Council, and was upon the point of getting it confirmed at Dijon. He was told that there were minors, who, notwithstanding the permission of the Council, might recover their possessions; but he replied, and this in writing, that the Jesuits ran no risk, as the Messieurs de Crassi would never have it in their power to advance the money which would be required for the recovery of their paternal estate.

Mr. de Voltaire was no sooner informed of the extraordinary method that Father Fesse was taking to serve the society of Jesuits, than he applied to the Clerk of the Bailiwick of Gex, and deposited a sufficient sum in his hands to answer the claims of the original creditors, so that the family of de Crassi might recover their right. The Jesuits were obliged to desist; and the family by a Decree of the Parliament of Dijon, were put in possession of the estate, and enjoy it at present.

The best of the whole affair is, that in a little time after, when France was delivered from the Reverend Father Jesuits, these very gentlemen, whose property the good Fathers were desirous of seizing, purchased the lands of the Jesuits, which were contiguous to them. Mr. de Voltaire,

taire, who had always combated the Atheists and Jesuits, wrote upon the occasion that we must acknowledge a Providence.

It was certainly neither hatred for Father Fesse, nor a desire of mortifying the Jesuits that engaged him in this affair, for since the suppression of the society, he has taken a Jesuit into his house*, and several others have written to him to beg he would likewise receive them. Some of the Ex-Jesuits, however, have been found to be of a more unjust and uncomplying turn of mind. Two of them, *Patouillet* and *Nonnote*, have made money by writing libels against him, and according to custom have not failed to call the Catholic religion to their assistance. *Nonnote* particularly signalized himself by writing half a dozen volumes, in which he has lavished more zeal than knowledge, and more abuse than zeal. Mr. Damillaville, one of the best writers of the Encyclopedia, has condescended to confute him, as Pasquier formerly stooped to check the absurd insolence of the Jesuit Garraffe.

But here follows the most singular and fatal adventure that has happened for a long time, and at the same time the most honourable for the King, his Council, and the Gentlemen of the Court of Requests. Who would have suspected that from the ice of *Mount Jura*, and the borders of Switzerland, the first lights and the first steps would have originated, towards clearing up and vindicating the innocence of the celebrated family of *Calas*? *Donat Calas*, a boy of fifteen years of age, and the youngest son of the unfor-

* This was Father Adam, who staid with him till 1776, when in consequence of some dispute he quitted M. de Voltaire, and went to live with the Curate of Ferney. T.

fortunate *Calas*, was apprentice to a merchant at Nîmes, when he heard of the dreadful punishment by which seven Judges of Toulouse, unhappily prejudiced, and put his worthy father to death.

The popular outcry against this family was so violent in Languedoc, that every body expected to see the children of *Calas* broke upon the wheel, and the mother burnt alive. Even the Attorney General expected it. So weak, it is said, had been the defence made by this innocent family, oppressed by misfortunes, and terrified by the blaze of lighted piles, and the sight of wheels and racks.

Young Donat *Calas* was made to dread sharing the fate of the rest of his family, and was advised to fly into Switzerland: he came and found Mr. de Voltaire, who at first could only pity and relieve him, without daring to judge of the sentence pronounced against his father, mother, and brothers.

Soon after, one of his brothers, who was only sentenced to be banished, came likewise and threw himself into the arms of Mr. de Voltaire. I can witness that for more than a month he took every possible precaution to be assured of the innocence of the family. But, when he was once convinced of it, he thought himself obliged in conscience to employ his friends, his purse, his pen, and his credit, to make reparation for the fatal mistake of the seven Judges of Toulouse, and to have the proceedings revised by the King's Council. This revision lasted three years, and it is well known what honour Messrs. de Crosne and Bacquancourt acquired by reporting this memorable cause. Fifty masters of the Court of Re-

quests unanimously declared the whole family of *Calas* innocent, and recommended them to the benevolent justice of his Majesty. The Duke de Choiseul, who never lets slip an opportunity of signalizing the greatness of his character, not only assisted this unfortunate family with money, but obtained for them a gratuity of thirty-six thousand livres * from the King.

On the 9th of March, 1765, the deed was signed which justified the family of *Calas* and changed their destiny. The 9th of March was the very day on which the virtuous father of that family had been executed. All Paris ran in crowds to see them come out of prison, and clapped their hands for joy, while the tears streamed from their eyes. The whole of that family have been warmly attached to Mr. de Voltaire ever since, who thinks himself honoured by continuing their friend.

It was remarked at that time, that in all France, there was not a single person except a certain Fre on, (author of *I know not what kind of periodical pamphlet*, at first entitled *Letters to the Countess*, and afterwards *Année Littéraire, the Literary Year*) who dared, in his ridiculous publications, to throw out doubts of the innocence of a family, which the King and his Council, and the whole of the public had so amply justified.

Several persons of worth engaged Mr. de Voltaire at that time to write his *Treatise on Toleration*, which is considered as one of his best works in prose, and is become the catechism of all who have either good sense or an equitable way of thinking.

About the same time the Empress Catherine the Second, whose name will be immortal, was

* Equal to 1,500l. sterling. T.

giving a code of laws to her empire, which contains a fifth part of the globe; and the first of these laws is the establishment of universal toleration.

It was the fate of our Recluse on the borders of Switzerland, to vindicate the innocence of those who were accused and condemned in France. The situation of his retreat between France, Switzerland, Geneva and Savoy, drew to him more than one unfortunate person. The whole family of *Sirven*, condemned to death in a little town near Castres, by a set of ignorant and cruel judges, fled for shelter to his estate. Though he was engaged eight years in procuring justice to be done them, he was never disheartened, and at length he succeeded.

We think it right to remark, that a village Magistrate of the name of Trinquet, who was King's Attorney in the jurisdiction which condemned the family of *Sirven* to be put to death, delivered his opinion in the following terms. *In the name of the King, I require that N. Sirven, and N. his wife, duly arraigned and convicted of having strangled and drowned their daughter, be banished the parish.* Nothing can better shew the effect which the sale of judicial offices produces in a country.

His kind stars, which as he himself used to say, were willing that he should be the pleader of causes already lost, likewise decreed that he should rescue from the flames a woman of St. Omers, of the name of Montbailly, who had been condemned to be burnt alive by the tribunal of Arras. They waited only for the poor woman's being delivered to carry her to the place of execution: her husband had already expired upon the wheel. What were these two victims? Two

patterns of conjugal and parental love; two virtuous people in poverty. This innocent and respectable couple had been accused of parricide, and condemned upon proofs which would have appeared ridiculous even to those Judges who condemned the family of Calas. Mr. de Voltaire was so fortunate as to procure an order from the Chancellor de Maupeou for a revival of the proceedings. The woman was declared innocent; and the stain wiped off from the memory of the husband; a miserable reparation this without satisfaction or recompense! In what a dreadful state is criminal jurisprudence with us! What an infernal series of horrid assassinations from the time the Templars were butchered, to the death of the Chevalier de la Barre! We think we are reading the history of savages;—we shudder for an instant, and then go to the Opera.

The city of Geneva was immersed in troubles which had been encreasing from the year 1763. These disturbances determined Mr. de Voltaire to give up his house of *Delights* to Messrs. Tronchin, and to reside constantly at the castle of Ferney, which he had entirely rebuilt, and ornamented with gardens laid out with agreeable simplicity.

The quarrel at Geneva rose to such a pitch, that on the 15th of February, 1770, the one party fired upon the other; some people were killed, and a number of tradesmen with their families came and begged an asylum with Mr. de Voltaire, which he immediately granted. He received some of them into his castle, and in a few years had fifty houses of hewn stone built for the rest: so that the village of Ferney, which at the time he purchased it, was only a wretched hamlet tenanted

tenanted by forty-nine miserable peasants, devoured by poverty, disease, and tax-gatherers; very soon became an agreeable place, inhabited by twelve hundred people, all of them comfortably situated, and successfully employed for themselves and the state. The duke de Choiseul protected this infant colony with all his power, so that they were soon in a situation to carry on a considerable trade.

One thing which I think worthy of attention is, that though this colony was composed of Roman Catholics and Protestants, it would have been impossible to discover that there were two different religions in Ferney. I have seen the wives of the Swiss and Genevese, with their own hands, prepare three temporary altars for the host, against the procession at the festival of the holy sacrament. They assisted at the ceremony with the most profound respect, and Mr. Hugonet, the new clergyman of Ferney, a man of a tolerating generous spirit, took an opportunity of thanking them in his discourse. When a Catholic was sick, the Protestants went to nurse him, and they met with the like assistance, when they had occasion for it.

This was the effect of those principles of humanity, which Mr. de Voltaire had recommended in all his works; but more particularly in his treatise on toleration. He always said that all mankind were brothers, and it was from facts that he reasoned. The *Guyons*, the *Nonnottes*, the *Patouilletts*, the *Paulians*, and other zealots, bitterly reproached him with it; but it was because they were not his brethren.

Behold, said he to the travellers who came to visit him, this inscription, DEO EREXIT, upon the
the

the church I have built. It is to God, the common father of all men. It is indeed the only church we have, perhaps, which is dedicated to God alone.

Among the great number of strangers who came in crowds to visit Ferney, there were more than one sovereign prince. Several of them, whose letters are in our hands, honoured him with a constant correspondence: the most uninterrupted, was that of the King of Prussia, and of Bareith.

The time which elapsed between the battle of Kolin (on the 18th of June, 1757) when the King of Prussia was defeated, and the affair of Rosbach, on the 5th of November, where he was victorious, is the most interesting period of this correspondence, which is a rare instance, by the bye, of a literary intercourse being kept up between a royal family of heroes and a plain man of letters. We have a great proof of this in the following memorable letter.

L E T T E R

From her Royal Highness the Princess of Bareith,
of the 12th of September, 1757.

“ I was sensibly affected with your letter; and
 “ that which you inclosed to me for the King
 “ had the same effect upon him. I hope you
 “ will be pleased with that part of his answer,
 “ which concerns you: but you will be as little
 “ satisfied with his resolutions as I am. I had
 “ flattered myself with the hope that your re-
 “ flections would have made some impression
 “ upon his mind, but by the inclosed note, you
 “ will

“ will see the contrary. Nothing remains for
 “ me but to follow his destiny, if it should be
 “ unfortunate. I never prided myself on being
 “ a philosopher, but I have done my endeavour
 “ to become one. The little progress I have
 “ made, has taught me to despise riches and
 “ grandeur; but I have found nothing in philo-
 “ sophy which can heal the wounds of the heart,
 “ except it be the getting rid of all ills, by
 “ ceasing to live. My present situation is worse
 “ than death. I see the greatest man of the age,
 “ my friend and brother, reduced to the most
 “ dreadful extremity. I see my whole family
 “ exposed to perils and dangers; my native
 “ country torn to pieces by merciless enemies;
 “ and the country where I am at present perhaps
 “ threatened with similar misfortunes. Would
 “ to Heaven that the evils I now mention to you
 “ had fallen upon me alone—I would suffer them
 “ with steadiness.

“ Pardon this detail; but the share you take
 “ in whatever regards me, induces me to open
 “ my heart to you. Alas! even hope is almost
 “ banished from it. Fortune, when she changes,
 “ is as constant in her persecutions as in her
 “ favours. History is full of these examples,
 “ but I have never seen a situation like ours, nor
 “ so cruel or inhuman a war, carried on among
 “ civilized nations. If you knew the situation
 “ of Germany and Prussia, it would draw tears
 “ from your eyes. The cruelties which the
 “ Russians commit in Prussia, make nature shud-
 “ der. How happy are you in your hermitage,
 “ reposing under the shade of your laurels, and
 “ deliberately philosophising on the misconduct
 “ of

“ of men! I wish you all possible happiness
“ there.

“ If fortune should smile on us again, you
“ may depend upon my acknowledgments. I
“ shall never forget the proofs of attachment
“ which you have given me; my sensibility shall
“ be my pledge; I am never a friend by halves,
“ and I shall always be truly one to brother
“ Voltaire.

WILHELMINA.

“ Present my compliments to Madame Denis.
“ Continue, I entreat you, to write to the King.”

We may see by this affecting and well-written letter, what an excellent heart the Margravine of Bareith had, and how well she deserved the encomiums bestowed on her by Mr. de Voltaire, in an ode lamenting her death, which was printed with his other works. But above all we observe the dreadful misfortunes which wars, undertaken upon slight pretences by Kings, bring upon their subjects, we may likewise observe to what they expose themselves, and the degree of unhappiness to which they may be reduced in being the cause of misery to whole nations.

From that moment, and during the whole course of that fatal war, the Recluse of Ferney gave every possible proof of his attachment to the Margravine, of his zeal for the King her brother, and of his love of peace. He engaged Cardinal de Trenchin, who was at that time retired to Lyons, to commence a correspondence with the Margravine, in order to bring about the wished-for peace. The letters both of the Princess and the Cardinal passed by the way of Geneva, a
neutral

neutral state, and through the hands of Mr. de Voltaire.

The resolution taken by the King of Prussia (after all the misfortunes which were the consequences of his defeat at Kolin) of marching towards Saxony, and opposing himself near Merfbourg to the combined armies of France and Austria, though they were greatly superior to him in number, and Marshal Richelieu was at no great distance with a victorious army, will be considered as a singular epoch. That Monarch, in the midst of all his misfortunes, had presence of mind enough, and was sufficiently master of his ideas, to make his will in verse. In this composition he did not conceal his misfortunes, but he spoke of them like a philosopher, and looked upon death with a calm and steady eye. We have this piece, which is a matchless monument, written entirely by his own hand.

We have a still more heroic monument of this philosophical Prince;—it is a letter to Mr. de Voltaire of the 9th of August, twenty-five days before his victory at Rosbach.

“ Je suis homme, il suffit, & né pour la souffrance ;

“ Aux rigueurs du destin j'oppose ma constance.”

Enough I know the terms of mortal state,

And brave the utmost rage of rig'rous fate.

“ But with these sentiments, I am far from
“ condemning Cato and Otho.—There was not
“ a single glorious moment in the life of the latter,
“ but that which concluded it.

L

“ Voltaire

" Voltaire dans son hermitage
 " Peut s'adonner en paix à la vertu du sage
 " Dont Platon nous traça la loi :
 " Pour moi, menacé du naufrage,
 " Je dois en affronter l'orage
 " Penser, vivre & mourir en Roi."

Voltaire in Ferney's hermitage
 May peaceful copy Plato's sage;
 But I, whom storms and shipwreck threat,
 Their utmost rage must boldly meet,
 The malice of my fate defy,
 And like a monarch think, live, die.

Nothing can be finer or more noble than these last verses. Corneille, in his best days, could not have written any thing better: and when a battle is gained after such verses, the sublime can reach no higher.

Cardinal Tenchin, as may be seen by his letters, always continued his secret negociations for peace, though to no purpose. It was the Duke de Choiseul who at length began this great and necessary word, which the Duke de Praslin completed. In doing this they rendered a most important service to France, which was ruined and impoverished.

The situation of that country was so deplorable, that during the twelve years of peace which followed this fatal war, of all the ministers of the finances, who rapidly succeeded one another, there was not one, who, with the best disposition and the most assiduous application, could even palliate the wounds of the state. Such was the want of money, that a Comptroller-general was obliged, on a pressing occasion, to seize all the cash which had been deposited by individuals in the hands of Mr. Magan, the King's Banker. Two hundred thousand

thousand lives were taken from our Recluse. It was an enormous loss, but, like a true Frenchman, he comforted himself by the following madrigal, which he composed *ex tempore* upon receiving the news of his misfortune.

Au tems de la grandeur Romaine
 Horace disoit à Mécène
 Quand cesserez vous de donner ?
 Chez le Welche on n'est pas si tendre.
 Je dois dire mais sans douleur
 A Monseigneur le Contrôleur,
 Quand cesserez vous de me prendre ?

In zenith of the Roman power,
 Horace his patron thus address'd,
 When will you cease your gifts to shower ?
 Less generous is a Frenchman's breast,
 Though always in a civil way ;
 I this request might fairly make,
 Now, good Comptroller, please to say,
 When will your Lordship cease to take ?

They did not stop here. The Duke de Choiseul, who had caused a magnificent harbour to be constructed at Versoy, upon the Lemane Lake, commonly called the Lake of Geneva, having had a frigate built there, it was seized in a port of Savoy near the famous *Ripaille*, by some people of Savoy, to whom the proprietors of this new scheme were indebted. Mr. de Voltaire immediately redeemed this royal vessel with money out of his own pocket, but has never been able to recover it from government, for the Duke de Choiseul lost all his employments at that time, and retired to his seat at Chanteloup, regretted not only by his friends, but by all the people in France, who admired his benevolent disposition,

the nobleness of his soul, and did justice to his superior abilities.

Our Recluse was tenderly attached to him by all the ties of gratitude. There was no kind of favour which the Duke de Choiseul did not readily grant on his recommendation. He made Mr. de la Houliere, who was nephew to Mr. de Voltaire, a brigadier in the army. Pensions, rewards, commissions, crosses of St. Louis, had been given as soon as asked.

Nothing could be more affecting to a man who was under so many obligations to him, and who had just established a colony of artists and manufactures under his auspices. This colony had already begun to be employed very successfully for Spain, Germany, Holland, and Italy. He now thought it ruined, but it was able to support itself. The Empress of Russia alone, and in the very heat of the war against the Turks, bought watches at Ferney to the amount of fifty thousand livres. There is no end to our astonishment, when we see this Princess at the same time laying out a million of livres in France and Holland for pictures, and some millions for jewels.

She made a present to Mr. Diderot of fifty thousand livres, with a delicacy and circumspection that added greatly to the value of the present. She offered to commit the principal care of her son's education to M. d'Alembert, with a salary of sixty thousand livres: but neither the health nor the philosophical disposition of Mr. d'Alembert, permitted him to accept an employment at St. Petersburg which was equal to what the Duke de la Vaugion enjoyed at Versailles. She sent Prince *Kosloutsky*, to present Mr. de Voltaire with some valuable furs, and a box turned with her

her own hands, ornamented with her picture and twenty diamonds. One might suppose this to be the history of Aboulcassem in the Arabian Nights.

Mr. de Voltaire told her that she had certainly taken all Mustapha's treasures in one of her victories. She replied, "*That with economy we are always rich, and that in this great war she would neither feel the want of men or money.*" And she has kept her word.

In the mean time Mr. Pigal, the famous Statuary, was employed at Paris in making a statue of the Hermit of Ferney. It was a foreign lady who one day, in the year 1770, proposed this piece of gallantry to some truly learned men, to make him amends for all the insipid libels and ridiculous calumnies which fanaticism and ignorance had incessantly heaped upon him. Madame Necker, wife to the Resident from Geneva*, was the first who conceived this project. She was a woman of a highly cultivated understanding, and of a goodness of heart superior, if possible, to her genius. The idea was eagerly adopted by all her visitors, upon condition that none but men of letters should be subscribers to the undertaking.

The King of Prussia, as a man of letters, to which title and to that of genius surely no man has a better claim, wrote to the celebrated Mr. d'Alembert, and expressed his desire to be among the first to subscribe. His letter of the 28th of July, 1770, is lodged in the archives of the Academy.

* Mr. Necker has been since appointed Comptroller-general of the Finances in France. T.

“ The finest monument of Voiraire is that
 “ which he himself hath erected in his works.
 “ They will last longer than the dome of St.
 “ Peter’s the Louvre, and all those buildings
 “ which vanity has consecrated to eternity. When
 “ the French language shall be no longer spoken,
 “ Voltaire will be translated into the language
 “ which shall next succeed it. In the mean time,
 “ filled with the pleasure which his produc-
 “ tions, so various, and each so perfect in its
 “ kind, have given me, I cannot, without in-
 “ gratitude, reject the proposal which you have
 “ made to me, of contributing to the monu-
 “ ment which is to be erected for him as a
 “ proof of public gratitude. You have only to
 “ let me know what is expected from me;—I
 “ will refuse nothing for a statue which does more
 “ honour to the men of letters who erect it, than
 “ it possible can to Voltaire. It will be said,
 “ that in the seventeenth century, in which so
 “ many men of letters were tearing one another
 “ in pieces through envy, there were some found
 “ who were noble and generous enough to do
 “ justice to a man whose genius and talents were
 “ superior to every age;—that we deserved to
 “ possess Voltaire:—and our latest posterity will
 “ envy us that singular advantage. To distinguish
 “ celebrated men, and do justice to their merit,
 “ is to encourage talents and virtue. It is the
 “ only recompence of elevated minds, and is
 “ justly due to those who cultivate letters in an
 “ eminent degree. They procure the pleasures
 “ of the mind, which are more lasting than those
 “ of the body;—they soften the most savage
 “ manners; they spread charms over the whole
 “ course of life;—they render our existence more
 “ supportable, and death less terrible. Continue,
 then,

“ then, Gentlemen, to protect and celebrate all
 “ those in France who apply themselves to these
 “ pursuits, and are so happy as to succeed in them.
 “ This will be the greatest honour you can possibly
 “ do your nation.

“ FREDERIC.”

The King of Prussia did more: he caused a statue of his old servant to be made in his fine porcelain, and sent it to him with the word *Immortalis* inscribed upon the pedestal. Mr. de Voltaire wrote under it,

Vous êtes généreux. Vos bontés souveraines
 Me font de trop nobles présens
 Vous me donnez sur mes vieux ans
 Une terre dans vos domaines.

You're generous, Sire; your royal bounty deigns
 To crown my labours with too rich reward.
 When stealing age unnerves your feeble bard,
 You grant him an estate in your domains.

Mr. Pigal undertook to execute the statue in France with the zeal of one artist who wished to immortalize another. This adventure, which was singular at that time, will very soon become common. It will become the fashion to erect the statues, or at least the busts of artists, as it is to call out, *the author, the author*, from the pit. But he to whom this honour was done, plainly foresaw that his enemies would be only the more exasperated by it. He wrote what follows to Mr. Pigal, which is rather in a stile perhaps too burlesque.

Monsieur

Monsieur Pigal, v^{otre} statue,
 Me fait millo-fois trop d'honneur.
 Jean Jaques a dit avec candeur
 Que c'est à lui, qu'elle etait due.
 Quand v^{otre} ciseau s'évertue
 A sculpter v^{otre} serviteur,
 Vous agacez l'esprit railleur
 De certain peuple rimailleur
 Qui depuis si longtems me hue.
 L'ami Freron le barbouilleur
 D'ecrits qu'on jette dans la rue,
 Sourdement de sa main crochue
 Multilera v^{otre} labeur.

Attendez que le destructeur
 Qui nous consume, & qui nous tue,
 Le tems, aidé de mon pasteur
 Ait d'un bras exterminateur
 Enterré ma tête chenue.
 Que feriez vous d'un pauvre auteur
 Dont la taille & le cou de grue,
 Et la mine très-peu jouflue
 Feront rire le connaisseur.
 Sculptez nous quelque beauté nue
 De qui la chair blanche & dodue
 Séduise l'œil du spectateur,
 Et qui dans nos sens infinue
 Ces doux desirs & cette ardeur
 Dont Pigmalion le sculpteur,
 V^{otre} digne predecesseur,
 Brula, si la fable en est crue.
 Son marbre eût un esprit, un cœur;
 Il eût mieux, dit un grave auteur;
 Car soudain fille devenue
 Cette fille resta pourvue
 Des dox appas que sa pudeur
 Ne dérobaît point à la vue.
 Même elle fut plus dissolue
 Que son père et son createur,
 C'est un exemple très flatteur
 Il faut bien qu'on le perpetue.

Pigal

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Pigal, the statue you project,
Is far too much for me t'expect.
Jean Jaques has modestly declar'd
His worth alone claims such reward.—
When you with skilful chissel strive
In stone to bid your servant live,
Of rhimers you the rage excite,
Who long 'gainst me have bent their spite;
Freron, whose libels never read,
In every dirty lane lie spread;
Will in some secret corner lurk
With crooked claw to maim the work;
Forbear till that destroying power,
(Whose ravening jaws will all devour)
Time, aided by the pious Priest,
Has laid my hoary head to rest.
The task's by far too mean for you,
What with a wretched author do,
Of dwarfish stature, long crane neck,
Lank visage, cheeks whose bones project;
The connoisseurs will only grin.—
Would you expect due praise to win,
Exert the utmost of your care
To carve us out a naked fair,
Whose snowy skin, whose dimpling charn
May fill our hearts with such alarms
As those which, if report says true,
In days of yore Pygmalion knew;
His marble was no lifeless mass,
But strait sprung up a lively lass;
Who scorning formal vain grimace,
Boldly display'd her sweetest grace:
'Tis said, ev'n burnt with fiercer fire,
Than felt her maker and her fire.
So sweet the pattern, there is no denying
An imitation to be well worth trying.

He was in the right when he said that this unexpected honour, would set all the fanatical writers of the *Pont neuf** upon him. He wrote to

* This answers to our Grub-street.

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Mr. Tiriot as follows: *All these gentlemen deserve statues much better than I do; and I confess there are some of them, who are extremely worthy of being publickly exposed in effigy.*

The Nonnottes, the Frerons, the Sabotirs, and their companions, exclaimed loudly on this occasion: but he who persecuted him with the greatest cruelty and absurdity, was a foreign mountaineer, who was fitter for sweeping chimnies, than directing consciences. This man, who was very familiar, wrote very cordially to the King of France, in the stile of one crowned head to another, to beg the favour of him to expel a sick man, of seventy-five years of age, from the house which he himself had built; and from the lands which he had cleared: and to take him from an hundred families, who derived their subsistence wholly from him. The King thought the proposal very unhandsome and somewhat unchristian like, and gave orders that the Monk might be told so.

Our Recluse, being sick and without employment at Ferney, was resolved to be revenged for this little manœuvre, only by having extreme unction administered to him by way of amusement, in the manner that was practised at that time. He acted as those people do who are called Jansenists at Paris: he sent word to his curate, named *Gros*, (an honest toper, who has since killed himself by hard drinking) desiring him to come and anoint him in his chamber on the first of April, without fail. The curate came accordingly, and remonstrated to him the necessity of first taking the sacrament, and that he would then give him as much holy oil as he pleased. The sick man accepted the proposal; the sacrament was brought into the chamber, on the 1st
of

of April, and there in the presence of witnesses, he declared before a notary, *That he forgave his slanderer who had endeavoured to ruin him, but had not succeeded.* This declaration was drawn up in proper form.

His enemy, astonished at this adventure, did not pique himself in following his example, and would never forgive him. He could hit on no other scheme but forging a declaration of the sick man, quite different from the genuine one which had been signed by the testator, and duly authenticated and examined before the notary in the presence of witnesses. Two forgers therefore, fifteen days after this, drew up a counter-profession of faith in the Savoyard dialect, but without daring to counterfeit the signature of the man, to whom they had the stupidity to attribute it. Mr. de Voltaire wrote the following letter upon the subject :

“ I am not offended with those people, who
 “ have made me speak in so barbarous and imper-
 “ tinent a stile; they have indeed expressed my
 “ real sentiments but badly; they have repeated
 “ in their jargon, what I have so frequently pub-
 “ lished in French, but they have not expressed
 “ the substance of my opinions the less on this
 “ account. I agree with them; I join in their
 “ faith; my enlightened zeal seconds their igno-
 “ rance, and I recommend myself to their Savoy-
 “ ard prayers. I only beg the pious forgers, who
 “ drew up the deed of the 15th of April, to
 “ consider that they ought not to counterfeit deeds,
 “ even in favour of the truth. The more the
 “ Catholic religion is true, (as all the world
 “ knows) the less need is there of telling lies for
 M 2 “ it.

"it. These little liberties which are but too
 "common, may authorize more dangerous im-
 "positions; and people may very soon think it
 "laudable to fabricate false wills, false donations,
 "and false accusations, for the glory of God.
 "More horrid forgeries than these have been em-
 "ployed on former occasions.

"Some of the pretended witnesses have con-
 "fessed that they were suborned, but that they
 "were made to believe they were doing good.
 "They have declared, that they only told lies
 "with a good intention.

"All this was done no doubt with the most
 "charitable intentions, in imitation of the re-
 "cantations imputed to Messrs. de Mountesquieu,
 "de la Chalotais, de Montclar, and so many
 "others. These pious frauds have been in fa-
 "shion about sixteen hundred years: but when
 "these good works go the length of falsehood, it
 "is risking a great deal in this world, in expec-
 "tation of the kingdom of Heaven."

W. B. 21
 Our Recluse continued chearfully to do the
 little good in his power, smiling at the same time
 at those who were so gloomy and mischievous,
 and very often strengthening the most serious
 truths by fallies of humour.

He confessed that he carried his raillery too
 far against some of his enemies. I was wrong,
 said he in one of his letters, but having been at-
 tacked by these gentlemen for forty years, I have
 lost my patience these ten years.

The revolution which took place in all the par-
 liaments of the kingdom, in the year 1771, could
 not fail to affect him. He had two nephews, one
 of whom came into the Parliament of Paris when
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the other quitted it. They were both men of distinguished merit and incorruptible probity, but engaged in opposite parties. He continued to love them both equally, and to preserve the same regard for them, but he loudly declared for the abolition of that venality, against which we have already quoted the energetic expressions of the Marquis d'Argenson. The scheme of doing justice gratuitously, like St. Louis, appeared admirable to him; he wrote chiefly in favour of unfortunate clients, who for four centuries had been obliged to travel an hundred and fifty leagues from their homes to complete their ruin in the capital, by losing, or even by gaining their causes. He always manifested these sentiments in his writings, and was steady in his principles without paying his court to any one.

Although he was at that time seventy-eight years of age, yet in one year he entirely new-wrote the *Sophonisba of Mairet*, and composed his tragedy of the *Laws of Minos*. He did not consider these productions, which were written in haste for the theatre in his own castle, as good pieces. The connoisseurs did not find much fault with the *Laws of Minos*; but it must be owned, that those dramatic works which have never appeared on the stage, or that have not continued to be played for a considerable time, serve no other purpose than that of swelling the heap of pamphlets with which Europe is overloaded;—like those pictures and prints, which if not received into the collections of connoisseurs, remain as if they had never existed.

In the year 1774, he had a singular opportunity of exerting the same zeal which he had had the

the good fortune to display in the tragical adventures of the families of Calas and Sirven.

He was informed that there was in the King of Prussia's troops at Wesel, a young French gentleman of modest merit and uncommon good sense. This young gentleman was only a volunteer. He was the same who had been condemned at Abbeville, together with the Chevalier de la Barre, to suffer the punishment of parricides for not kneeling in time of rain before a procession of Capuchins, who had passed about fifty or sixty paces from them.

There was added to this accusation, that of having sung an indecent song, written above an hundred years ago, and repeating Piron's Ode to Priapus. This Ode of Piron's was a lewd flight of genius and youth, and was thought to be so excusable by Louis XV. King of France, that having been informed the author was poor, he gave him a pension out of his private purse. Thus he who composed the piece was rewarded by a good King, while they who repeated it, were condemned, by some inhuman monsters of a village, to suffer the most dreadful punishments.

Three Judges of Abbeville conducted the prosecution, and their sentence was as follows: That the Chevalier de la Barre, and his young friend, (of whom we have been speaking) should be put to the torture ordinary and extraordinary, their hands be cut off, their tongues torn out with pincers, and their bodies burnt alive.

Of the three Judges who gave this sentence, two were absolutely incompetent. One of them, because he was the declared enemy of the young people's parents; the other, because having formerly got himself admitted Counsellor, he had
since

since purchased and followed the employment of Attorney in Abbeville; his principal business was that of a dealer in bullocks and hogs; sentences had been passed against him by the Consuls of Abbeville, and the Court of Aids has since declared him incapable of holding any municipal employment in the kingdom.

The third Judge, intimidated by the two others, had the weakness to subscribe to their sentence, and has since experienced the most poignant and fruitless remorse.

The Chevalier de la Barre was executed, to the astonishment of all Europe; that still shudders at the horror of the deed. His friend was outlawed, having been in a foreign country before the prosecution took place.

This sentence so execrable, and at the same time so absurd, which will be an eternal disgrace to France, was much more to be condemned than that by which the innocent Calas was broke upon the wheel; for the Judges of Calas were guilty of no other fault than that of deceiving themselves, while the crime of the Abbeville Judges, was their being monsters of cruelty with their eyes open. They condemned two innocent young men to suffer as cruel a death as Ravillac and Damiens, for a levity which did not deserve even a week's imprisonment. It may be said that since the massacre of St. Bartholomew, nothing more dreadful than this has happened. It is melancholy to relate such an instance of brutal ferocity as is not to be met with among the most savage people, but truth obliges us to do it. It is somewhat remarkable, that these horrid acts have been committed for the sake of religion, at a time when
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the most unbounded luxury, effeminacy and dissipation have been prevalent.

Mr. de Voltaire having therefore been informed that one of these young persons, a victim of the most detestable fanaticism that ever polluted the earth, was in one of the King of Prussia's regiments, he acquainted that monarch with it, who immediately had the generosity to make him an officer. The King of Prussia enquired particularly about the young gentleman; he found that he had learnt the art of drawing and design without the help of a master; that he was prudent, sensible and virtuous; and that the whole of his conduct served to condemn his pretended Judges at Abbeville. The King condescended to call him near his person, gave him a company, appointed him his engineer, and honoured him with a pension; and thus by his benevolence wiped away the crimes committed by folly and barbarity. He wrote in the most affecting terms to Mr. de Voltaire to acquaint him with what he had done for this truly valuable and unfortunate young soldier. We have all been witnesses of this horrid affair, so dishonourable for France, and so glorious for a royal philosopher. This great example will *inform* mankind, but will it *correct* them?

Immediately after this our old man renewed his frozen age, in order to take advantage of the patriotic views of a new Minister, who was the first in France that set out with being the father of the people. The estate which Mr. de Voltaire had chosen in the Pays de Gex, was a stripe of land bout five or six leagues in length, and about two in breadth, between Mount Jura, the Lake of Geneva, the Alps, and Switzerland.

This country was infested with about fourscore collectors of the revenue, who disgraced the dignity of their employment, and, without the knowledge of their masters, shamefully tormented the poor people. The country was in the most dreadful misery, but he was so happy as to obtain a grant from this benevolent Minister, by which this solitude (I dare not say province) was delivered from every vexation, and became free and happy. After this, said he, I ought to die, for I can rise no higher.

He did not die however at that time, but his noble rival and illustrious adversary *Freron* died; and a very droll affair, in my opinion, happened upon the occasion. Mr. de Voltaire received an invitation from Paris to be present at the funeral of this poor devil. A female, who was one of the family, wrote an anonymous letter to him, which is in my hands, proposing, in the most serious manner, that he should procure a husband for the daughter of *Freron*, as he had done for the descendant of *Corneille*. She conjured him in the most pressing terms, and informed him, that he might write to the curate of the *Magdalen* at Paris, for that purpose. Mr. de Voltaire told me, that if *Freron* had written the *Cid*, *Cinna*, and *Polyeuctes*, he would have immediately complied.

He did not always receive anonymous letters. A Mr. Clement addressed several to him and signed them with his name. This Clement, who had been a teacher in a college at *Dijon*, and who set himself up for a master in the art of reasoning, and in the art of writing, came to Paris to live by a trade which may be carried on without having served an apprenticeship;—he com-

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menced libeller. The Abbé Voisenon wrote upon this occasion, *Zoilus genuit Mevium, Mevius genuit Giot des Fontaines, Giot autem genuit Freron, Freron autem genuit Clement* *, and thus great families degenerate. This Mr. Clement had attacked the Marquis de St. Lambert, Mr. de Lille, and several other Members of the Academy, with a violence which the most irritated client could not have employed, if his whole fortune had been at stake. And for what was all this? for a few verses truly. It was like the learned Doctor in Moliere, who foamed at the mouth with rage, because a man had, in his hearing, said, the form of a hat, and not the figure of a hat. Here is what Mr. de Voltaire wrote to the Abbé Voisenon.

— — — — —
 “ Il est bien vrai que l'on m'annonce
 “ Les lettres de maître Clement.
 “ Il a beau m'écrire souvent,
 “ Il n'obtiendra point de réponse.
 “ Je ne ferai pas assez sot
 “ Pour m'embarquer dans ces querelles.
 “ Si ç'eut été Clement Marot
 “ Il aurait eu de mes nouvelles.

Clement to me has often writ,
 But answer never will receive,
 I surely should have lost my wit,
 To quarrel with the railing knave:
 Had Clement Marot sent a letter,
 In sooth he had been treated better.

“ But for Mr. Clement, not Marot, who in
 “ a volume much larger than the *Henriade*,

* *Zoilus* begot *Mevius*, *Mevius* begot *Giot Des Fontaines*, *Giot* begot *Freron*, *Freron* begot *Clement*.

“ proves to me that the *Henriade* is but of little
 “ value ; alas ! I have known it these sixty years
 “ as well as he. At the age of twenty-one I be-
 “ gan with the second Canto of the *Henriade*—
 “ I was at that time in the same predicament that
 “ Mr. Clément seems to be in at present ; I did not
 “ know what I was about. Instead of writing
 “ a large volume against me, why does not he
 “ write a better *Henriade* ? ’Tis so easy a mat-
 “ ter ! ”

There are men of a certain turn of mind, who
 having once contracted a habit of writing, can-
 not relinquish it in their most advanced age ;—
 such were Huet and Fontenelle. Our author,
 though oppressed with years and infirmities, was
 always cheerfully employed. His Epistle to Boi-
 leau, his Epistle to Horace, the *Tacticks*, the
 Dialogue of Pegasus and the Old Man, John who
 Laughs and Cries, and several other little pieces
 of that kind, were written at the age of eighty-
 two. In conjunction with two or three men of
 learning, he wrote three-fourths of *The Questions*
on the Encyclopedia. As soon as each volume made
 its appearance, several editions of it were pub-
 lished. They are all of them very incorrectly
 printed.

There is a very singular fact relating to the arti-
 cle *Messiah*, which shews that the eyes of Envy are
 not always clear-sighted. That article which has
 been already printed in the great Paris edition,
 was written by Mr. Polier de Bottens, chief Pastor
 of the Church of Lausanne ; a man no less re-
 spectable for his virtue than his learning. The
 article is sensible, instructive, and of profound
 erudition ;—we have the original in the author’s

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own hand. While it was believed to be written by Mr. de Voltaire, there were an hundred faults found in it; but the moment it was known to be the work of a clergyman, it was acknowledged to be truly Christian.

Among the number who fell into this snare, we may reckon the Ex-Jesuit, *Nonnotte*. It was this same man who thought fit to deny that there was a little town called Livron, in Dauphiny, besieged by order of *Henry the Third*; who did not know that some of our first race of Kings had several wives at one time;—who did not know that *Eucherius* was the first author of the fable of the Theban Legion. It was he who wrote two volumes against *the History of the Genius and Manners of Nations*, and who blundered in every page of the two volumes. His book sold, because he attacked a person who was well known.

The fanaticism of this Nonnotte was so great, that in I know not what, *philosophical, religious, or anti-philosophical Dictionary*, under the article *Miracle*, he assures us that when the *host* at Dijon was stabbed with a pen-knife, it discharged twenty porringers of blood:—and that another *host* being thrown into the fire at Dôle, skipped away to the altar. Friar Nonnotte, to prove these two facts, quotes two Latin verses from a president Boisvin, of Franchcomté.

*Impie, quid dubitas hominemque Deumque fateri?
Se probat esse hominem sanguine, & igne Deum.*

Which, when these two impertinent verses are given in a clear sense, signifies, “ Impious wretch,
“ wherefore dost thou hesitate to acknowledge a
“ man —

“man—God? He proves that he is man by
“blood, and God by fire.”

Nothing could be better demonstrated; and upon this proof Nonnotte exclaims in ecstasy; *Thus ought we to proceed in regulating our belief of miracles.*

But the good Nonnotte, in regulating his belief on the absurdities of theologians, or the reasonings of mad men, did not know that there are more than threescore towns in Europe, where the people give out that the Jews stabbed the *host* with knives, and that blood immediately followed;—he does not know that even in these days a similar adventure is commemorated at Brussels. Forty years ago, when I was there, I remember to have heard the following agreeable song:

Gaudissons nous, bons Chrétiens, au supplice
Du vilain Juif appelé Jonathan,
Qui sur l'autel a, par grande malice,
Assassiné le très saint Sacrement.

Rejoice! rejoice each Christian man!
For now gives up the ghost,
That cursed Jew 'clep'd Jonathan
Who slew the sacred host,

He does not know the miracle of Goose-street, in Paris, where the inhabitants every year burn at the end of the street the figure of a Swiss who assassinated the Holy Virgin, and the Infant Jesus;—nor the miracle of the Carmelites, called *Billettes*, and a hundred others of the same kind, celebrated by the dregs of the people, and brought in evidence by the dregs of writers, who would have us give the same credit to these nonsensical tales, as to the miracle at the marriage in Cana, or that of the five loaves,

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All these fathers of the church, some on coming out of the Bissetre, others on coming out of an alehouse, and some after begging alms of him, were continually sending him either libels or anonymous letters, which he threw into the fire unopened. It was by dint of reflecting on the infamous and contemptible profession of these pitiful wretches, who stile themselves men of letters, that he composed a little piece, called *Le pauvre Diable*, (*The poor Devil*) in which he makes it plainly appear, that it is a thousand times better to be a footman or porter in a good family, than to drag on a life of indigence in streets, coffee-houses, and garrets, which they can scarcely support by selling libels to booksellers, in which they judge Kings, insult women, govern states, and abuse their neighbours without either wit or common sense.

Of late he has shewn a perfect indifference for his own works; about which he had always been little solicitous, and which he never mentioned. They were continually reprinted without his being even acquainted with it. If an edition of the *Henriade*, or his tragedies, or of his historical or fugitive pieces, was nearly exhausted, another was instantly produced. He frequently wrote to the Booksellers, *Do not print such a number of volumes as my works;—a man cannot reach posterity with so much heavy baggage.* They did not attend to him, but reprinted them in a hurry, without consulting him: and what is almost incredible, yet true, they printed a magnificent edition in quarto at Geneva, without his ever seeing a single page, in which they inserted a number of pieces that were not his, and the real authors of which are very well

well known. It was with regard to all these different editions that he said and wrote to his friends, *I look upon myself as a dead man, whose effects are upon sale**.

The chief magistrate, and the chief pastor of Lausanne, having established a printing house in that town, they published an edition, which they said was complete, with the name of London on the title page. These editors have inserted more than an hundred little pieces in prose and verse, that could not come from him, nor from a man of any taste, nor from a gentleman; such as the following, which may be met with in the writings of the Abbé de Grécour.

Belle maman foyez l'arbitre
Si la fièvre n'est pas un titre
Suffisant pour me disculper.
Je suis au lit comme un bétitre
Et c'est à force de lamper, &c.

My dear mamma, without a grudge,
I leave it to yourself to judge,
If I be ought to blame.
By guzzling, like a sluggard, I
Am condemn'd in bed to lie,
Scorch'd with the fever's flame, &c.

* This edition in quarto is faulty, on account of the disorder which disfigures several of the volumes; we observe a piece composed in 1720 following one of 1770; and there is a profusion of a hundred little pieces which do not belong to the author, and are unworthy of the public; there is, lastly, a number of typographical errors; yet perhaps it may be sought after on account of the beauty of the paper, the type, and the engravings.

Such

Such likewise is the apotheosis of Mademoiselle le Couvreur, written by one Bonneval, a schoolmaster.

Quel contraste frappe mes yeux
Melpomène ici desolée,
Elève avec l'aveu des dieux
Un magnifique mausolée, &c.

What contrast strikes my eyes!
Assents the synod of the skies;
And to Melpomené in tears
A pompous mausoleum rears, &c.

And the following miserable piece:

Adieu, ma pauvre tabatiere,
Adieu doux fruit, de mes ecus, &c.

My poor snuff-box then adieu,
Pleasing purchase of my crowns, &c.

And likewise another, entitled, *Le Loup Moraliste* (*The Moralizing Wolf*); and I know not what sort of an ode, entitled, *Le Vrai Dieu* (*The True God*) which seems to have been written by a coachman at Vertamon, who has since turned Capuchin.

These pieces of dulness were carefully collected in the *complete edition* from the new works of Madame Oudot, the Almanacks of the Muses, the Port-Folio Recovered, and the other works of genius which decorate the *Pont-neuf*, and the Quay of the Theatins at Paris. They may be found in great abundance in the twenty-third volume of the Lausanne edition. Such trash is only fit for the pastry cooks. The editors have likewise been so obliging as to insert in the title page of these disgusting

disgusting insipidities, *the whole revised and corrected by the author*, who assuredly had not seen a page of them. *Robert Stephens* did use to print in this manner. The scarcity of books formerly was greatly to be preferred to the oppressive loads of writings which now over-run London and Paris, and shower in sonnets upon Italy.

When some of his letters were counterfeited and printed in Holland, under the title of *Private Letters*, he parodied the old epigram,

“Voilà donc mes lettres secrettes,
 “Si secrettes, que pour Lecteur
 “Elles n'ont que leur Imprimeur,
 “Et ces Messieurs qui les ont faites.”

Lo then expos'd to public fight,
 My private letters see the light;
 So private, that none ever read 'em,
 Save they who printed, and who made 'em.

We are unwilling to name the worthy gentleman who, in 1766, with a Geneva title page, printed at Amsterdam the *Letters of Mr. de Voltaire to his Friends of Parnassus, with notes critical and historical*. This Editor reckoned among his friends of Parnassus the Queen of Sweden, the Elector Palatine, the King of Poland, and the King of Prussia. Very good friends these, and a charming Parnassus! Not content with this excessive impertinence, the Editor, on purpose to make his book sell, had the knavery to follow the example first set by Baumelle. He forged several letters which were indeed already known, and among the rest, a letter upon the French and Italian languages, written in 1761 to Mr. *Tovafi Deodati*, in which this same forger, with the most insipid rudeness,

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mangles several of the first nobility in France. Happily he lent his own stile to the author in whole name he wrote, on purpose to ruin him. He makes Mr. de Voltaire say, *that the Ladies of Versailles are agreeable Gossips, and that Jean Jaques Rousseau is their little puppy.* Thus it is, that in France we have had eminent geniuses at two-pence the sheet, who have written letters for Ninon de l'Enclos, Madame de Maintenon, Cardinal Alberoni, Queen Christina, Mandrin, &c. The most honest of these wits was he who said,
*" I am engaged at present in making some of the Duke
 " de Rochefoucault's reflections.*

We shall now give some of Mr. de Voltaire's Original Letters, taken from his own minutes, which are at present in our hands. We only publish such as we imagine may be of some utility.

ORIGINAL

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ORIGINAL LETTERS
O F
MR. DE VOLTAIRE.

Here follows a faithful Copy of his Letter on Language, written to Mr. Tovafi Deodati, the 24th January, 1776, and which has been so shamefully disfigured in a Dutch Edition.

I AM extremely sensible, Sir, of the honour you have done me, by sending me your Treatise on *the Excellency of the Italian Language*: it was like sending to a lover an encomium on his mistress.—Give me leave, however, to offer some reflections in favour of the French tongue, which you seem to depreciate a little too much.—A man often takes the part of his wife, when she is not treated with sufficient respect by his mistress.

I believe, Sir, that no language can be said to be perfect. It is with languages as with many other things in which the ignorant have prescribed laws to the learned.

All languages were originally formed by the ignorant multitude. Workmen have given names to all their tools. Men, in the infancy of society, contrived words to express their wants, and after a great number of ages, men of genius made the best use they could of the terms which had been established by chance among the people.

It seems to me that there are only two languages existing that are truly harmonious,—the Greek and the Latin. They are indeed the only

ones in which we find a verification that can boast of a genuine measure,—a certain *Rhythmus*, a real mixture of *Daetyls* and *Spondees*, and quantity in the syllables.—The rude inventors of those two languages, had certainly more musical heads, a juster ear, and more delicate organs than other nations.

You have, you say, Sir, long and short syllables in your beautiful Italian language, and so have we in our French; but neither you nor we, nor any other nation have real *Daetyls* and *Spondees*. Our verses are distinguished by the number, and not by the quantity of the syllables. *La bella lingua Toscana e la figlia primogenita del Latino.* “The beautiful Tuscan language is the eldest daughter of the Latin.” Enjoy your right of seniority, but allow your younger sisters some share in the succession.

I have always respected the Italians as our masters; but you will acknowledge that you have formed excellent scholars. Almost all the European languages have a mixture of beauties and faults which balance each other. You have not the melodious and stately terminations of the Spanish words, which are rendered so sonorous by a happy concurrence of vowels and consonants: *los rios, los hombres, las historias, los costumbres.* Nor have you those diphthongs which in our language produce so harmonious an effect; *les Rois, les Empereurs, les exploits, les histories*: you reproach us with our *e* mute, as a flat dull sound, which expires on our lips, but to that *e* mute are we principally indebted for the harmony of our prose and verse. *Empire, couronne, diademe, flamme, tendresse, victoire*: all these happy terminations leave a sound, which dwells upon the ear even after the word

word is pronounced, as a harpsichord echoes after the finger is lifted off the keys.

Acknowledge, Sir, that the prodigious variety of all these terminations, may have some advantage over the five terminations of all the words in your language, and even of these five, the last ought to be omitted; for you have not above seven or eight words that end in *u*, so that there remain only four sounds, *a, e, i, o*, for the terminations of all Italian words. Do you sincerely think that the ear of a foreigner can be pleased with hearing the following verses of Tasso?

————— il Capitano

Che'l grano sepolcro libero di Christo,
E che molto opro col fenno e colla mano.

Do you think that all these *o*'s can be agreeable to any ear not accustomed to it? Compare with this dull uniformity so tiresome to a stranger;—compare with those dry heavy lines, these two simple verses of Corneille:

Le destin se déclare, & nous venons d'entendre
Ce qu'il a resolu du beau-père & du gendre.

You see that every word has a different termination. Pronounce now these two verses of Homer,

Εξ ἔδη ἴα πρώτα διαστήην ἐριστῆ
Ἀλκείδης ἰε ἀναξ ἀνδρῶν καὶ δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς.

Pronounce these verses before an English or German young lady, who has the least delicacy of ear, she will prefer the Greek;—she will tolerate the French, and she will be a little disgusted with the uniformity of the Italian terminations. 'Tis an experiment I have often tried.

I

Your

Your poets, who have assisted in forming your language, were so sensible of this radical defect in the termination of the Italian words, that they have cut off the letters *e* and *o*, in which your infinitives, preterites, and nominatives, constantly end. They say *amar*, instead of *amaré*, *noqueron*, for *noquerono*, *la stagion* for *la stagioné*, *buon* for *buono*, *malevol* for *malevole*. You have aimed at avoiding disagreeable sounds, and this has led you frequently to fall into the error of terminating your verses with the canine letter *r*, which the Greeks never did.

I acknowledge that the Latin tongue must have long appeared rude and barbarous to the Greeks, from the frequent repetition of *ur* and *um*, and the multitude of proper names which terminated in *us*. We have succeeded better than you in getting rid of this uniformity. ~~At~~ Rome was antiently filled with Senators and Knights in *us*, we at present meet only with Cardinals and Abbés in *i*.)

You boast, Sir, and with great reason, of the extreme copiousness of your language, but you will allow that we labour under no scarcity. There is indeed, no idiom existing which paints all the different shades of things. In this respect, all languages are poor; for example, no language can express, by a single word, love founded on esteem, or on beauty alone, on similarity of characters, or on constitution; it is the same with all the passions, and all the qualities of our soul: what we perceive the most distinctly, is often that which we cannot express.

Yet, Sir, do not imagine, that in every thing we are reduced to the extreme indigence with which you reproach us. You have given us
a catalogue

a catalogue in two columns of your superfluity and our poverty. You place on one side *orgoglio*, *alterigia*, *superbia*, and on the other the single word *orgueil*. But, Sir, we have *orgueil*, *superbe*, *hauteur*, *fiercé*, *morgue*, *elevation*, *dedain*, *arrogance*, *insolence*, *gloire*, *gloriole*, *presumption*, *outré cuidance*. All these words express different shades of the same passion, in the same manner as your *orgoglio*, *superbia*, *alterigia*, are not always precisely synonymous.

You reproach us in your alphabet of our wants, with having only one word to signify *valiant*. I know, Sir, that your nation is very valiant when it pleases itself, and when it is the pleasure of others; Germany and France have had the good fortune to have in their service many very brave and distinguished Italian officers. *L'italico valor non e ancor morto*. "The Italian valour is not yet extinct."

But if you have *valente*, *prode*, *animoso*, we have *vaillant*, *valeureux*, *preux*, *courageux*, *intrepide*, *hardi*, *animé*, *audacieux*, *brave*, &c. Of that courage, that bravery, there are many different characters, each of which has its peculiar epithet. We would say that our generals are valiant, courageous, brave, but we would distinguish that keen, impetuous courage of the general who carried all the works of Port-Mahon sword in hand, which were cut in the living rock: from that unshaken, deliberate, and skilful firmness, with which one of our commanders preserved a whole garrison from the brink of ruin, and performed a march of thirty leagues in sight of an enemy's army, composed of thirty thousand men.

We would express, in a still different manner, the calm intrepidity which was so much admired by connoisseurs in the Grand Nephew of the Hero
of

of the *Valtelline*, when, after his forces were put to the rout by a panic terror which seized our allies, that General perceiving the regiment of *Diesbach*, and another making head against a victorious army, tho' they were already attacked by the enemy's cavalry, and exposed to a heavy fire of their artillery, went alone to those regiments, praised their *valour*, their *courage*, their *firmness*, their *intrepidity*, their *resolution*, their *patience*, their *boldness*, their *spirit*, their *bravery*, their *heroism*, &c. See, Sir, how many terms instead of one. He had afterwards the courage coolly, and in defiance of a victorious army, to draw off those two regiments, from the danger into which their gallantry had led them; and after all this had spirit enough to bear the reproaches of a multitude always ill-informed. Believe then, Sir, I intreat you, that we have in our language, powers to express all that the defenders of our country have the merit to perform.

You insult us, Sir, on the word *ragout*; you imagine that we have only that term to express our *messes*, our *dishes*, our *entries*, our *services*. Would to God you were in the right! my health would be the better for it, but unhappily we have an entire dictionary of cookery.

You boast of having two expressions for a *glutton*; but, Sir, deign to pity our *gormandizers*, our *epicures*, our *great eaters*, our *gluttons*.

You are only acquainted with the word *learned*; but we have other words, such as *able*, *enlightened*, *well-informed*, and can distinguish men of *learning*, men of *erudition*, and men of *letters*. You will find among us both the word and the thing.

Believe me, it is the same with every reproach you have cast upon us. We have no *diminutives*.
We

We had as many as you in the time of Marot, Rabelais, and Montaigne, but such puerilities appeared to us unworthy of a language ennobled by the Pascals, the Bossuets, the Fenelons, the Pelissons, the Corneilles, the Boileaus, the Racines, the Maffillons, the Fontaines, the Bruyeres. We have left to Marot, Ronsard, and Dubartas, the burlesque diminutives in *otte* and in *ette*, scarce preserving any but *fleurette*, *amourette*, *fillette*, *grissette*, *grandelette*, *vieillote*, *nabotte*, *villotte*, and even these we employ only in the most familiar stile.

Do not imitate *Buon' Matthei*, who in his discourse before the Academy de la *Crusca*, so highly extolled your exclusive advantage of expressing a hamper and a hand-basket, by *corbello* and *corbellino*, forgetting that we have *corbeilles* and *corbeillons*.

You, Sir, possess much more solid advantages;—your language admits of inversion, and it is easier to compose an hundred good verses in Italian, than ten in French. The reason of this facility is that you tolerate the *hiatus*, that gaping of the syllables which is proscribed among us; that all your words being terminated by *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, you have at least twenty times our stock of rhimes, and what is more, that your poets may dispense with rhyme altogether. You are less restricted than we to the Hemistich and Cessura; you dance at liberty and we in chains.

But believe me, Sir, you ought not to reproach our language with roughness or want of prosody, nor with obscurity or dryness. Your translations of some French works are sufficient to prove the contrary. Besides, see what has been written by Messrs. d'Olivet and du Marfais on the method of

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speaking

speaking our language with propriety. Read Mr. Du Clos : observe what force, clearness, elegance and energy of style Messieurs D'Alembert and Diderot constantly employ in their writings ; what picturesque expressions are often used by Mr. de Buffon, and Mr. Helvetius, in works which do not always appear susceptible of the ornaments of style.

I shall conclude this letter, which is already of too great a length, with one reflection. If the first formation of languages is due to the vulgar, we owe their perfection to the excellent writings of men of genius, and the first of all languages is that which affords the finest compositions.

“ Etalés moins votre abondance,

“ Votre origine & vos honneurs :

“ Il ne sied pas aux Grand-Seigneurs

“ De se vanter de leur naissance.

“ L'Italie instruit la France ;

“ Mais par un reproche indiscret,

“ Nous ferions forcés, a regret,

“ A manquer de reconnaissance.

“ Dès longtems fortis de l'enfance,

“ Nous avons quitté les genoux

“ D'une nourrice en décadence,

“ Dont le lait n'est plus fait pour nous.

“ Nous pourrions devenir jaloux,

“ Quand vous parlez notre langage.

“ Puis qu'il est embelli par vous,

“ Cessez donc de lui faire outrage.

“ L'égalité contente un Sage :

“ Terminons ainsi le procès.

“ Quand on est égal aux Français.

“ Ce n'est pas un mauvais partage.

Boast not so much your copious tongue,
That ancient race from which you sprung;
Ill fits the great who worth inherit,
To plead their ancestry as merit.

Tis true that your kind fostering care,
In France fair science deign'd to rear;
But when reproaches you employ,
Our gratitude you straight destroy.

Long since our infant age is past,
Our childish toys behind us cast,
No more our aged nurse we heed,
Nor follow where she strives to lead.

Pale Envy might suffuse our cheek,
Our language when you deign to speak;
Then what your genius serves t'adorn,
No more presume to treat with scorn.

Equality contents the sage,
No more this useless war then wage,
With France who shares an equal fame,
No higher portion ought to claim.

L E T T E R II.

From Mr. de Voltaire to the Count de Caylus.
On some pieces of Sculpture, by Bouchardon.

[*We have not been able to find the date.*]

YOU overwhelm me, Sir, with joy and gratitude;—I interest myself almost as much as you do in the progress of the arts, particularly sculpture and painting, altho' I am only an admirer of them. Mr. Bouchardon is our Phidias. There is a great deal of genius in his idea of Cupid making a bow out of Hercules's club; but then this Cupid must be of no small stature; he must necessarily be in the attitude of a journeyman carpenter at work, so

that he and the club must be nearly of the same height. Hercules is said to have been nine feet high, and his club near six feet long. If the sculptor observes these dimensions, how shall we distinguish the infant Cupid, which is the age in which he ought always to be represented?—Do you think that Love, surrounded by the chips which fall from his chissel, will be an agreeable object? Besides, will any body who sees a part of the bow issuing from the club, guess it to be the bow of Love?—will the sword at his feet inform us that it is the sword of Mars?—Why of Mars more than Hercules?—Cupid was long ago represented playing with the arms of Mars, and that has really a picturesque effect; but I am afraid Bouchardon's idea is only ingenious.

It would seem that it is with painting and sculpture as with music; neither of them can convey the expression of wit: a musician will be unable to make us feel the tune of a madrigal; and an ingenious allegory, which is directed wholly to the wit, can never be expressed either by the sculptor or the painter. In my opinion, a thought, in order to be fine, ought to be animated by some passion; it ought to be characterized in an unequivocal manner, and above all, its expression ought to be as pleasing to the eye, as the idea is delightful to the fancy. Without this it will be said a sculptor aimed at characterizing Love, and made him a sculptor.—If a pastry-cook turned painter, he would represent that deity drawing tarts out of the oven. The thing, in my opinion, would have merit were it pleasing; but even the single idea of the callus, which the exercise of sculpture often produces on the hands, might disfigure the lover of Psyche.—In short,
2 my

my great objection is, that if Mr. Bouchardon has a block of marble large enough to form two figures, it would be a great pity to have his work spoiled by a large ugly club, or a small disproportionate one.—Perhaps I am wrong:—I certainly am if you condemn me.—But give me leave to ask you, Sir, what will constitute the beauty of his work? Doubtless the attitude of the god, the nobleness, the beauty of the figure; the rest is not an object for the sight. You will acknowledge surely that a well formed hand, an animated eye, are preferable to all the allegories. I could wish to see our great artist undertake something that might interest the passions.—Pugot has so exquisitely expressed the passion of grief!—An Apollo who has just killed Hyacinthus! A Cupid looking at Psyche in a swoon.—A Venus by the side of a dying Adonis.—These, in my opinion, are the subjects proper to display all the powers of sculpture. I am very presumptuous to talk thus before you.—I Intreat you, Sir, to pardon my temerity.

I have nothing to say concerning the beautiful fountain with which our capital is soon to be embellished, except that Mr. Turgot* ought to be perpetual edile and prætor. The Parisians should contribute more towards embellishing their town and destroying the monuments of Gothic barbarism; particularly those ridiculous village-fountains with which our city is disfigured. I make no doubt but Bouchardon will make an excellent piece of architecture of this fountain; but after all, what effect can be expected from a work of

* Father of the late Comptroller-General,

this kind, reared against the side of a wall in a street, and half hid by a house? What can we think of a fountain furnished with only two cocks, to which the water-carriers will throng in crowds to fill their buckets. This is not the plan on which the fountains were constructed, which add so much to the embellishment of Rome. We find it very difficult to get rid of a low barbarous taste. Fountains ought to be built in squares, where those beautiful monuments of architecture might be seen on every side. But there is not a single square in the vast suburb of St. Germaine. My heart bleeds while I write. Paris is like the statue of Nebuchadnezzar, one part gold, and another part dirt.

L E T T E R III.

From Mr. Clairaut to Mr. de Voltaire.

[*Dated Paris, 16 August, 1759.*]

S I R,

THE friendship with which you formerly honoured me is ever present in my thoughts, as one of the most flattering distinctions I ever obtained. If I have long abstained from soliciting new testimonies of it, I beg you will attribute my forbearance only to an apprehension of depriving you of the least portion of that time with the value of which all Europe is acquainted. That apprehension, so just on the generality of occasions which determine the common run of mankind, would be ill placed when it is possible to communicate to you some reflections on points proper to engage your attention; and the extensive variety of your knowledge prevents you from thinking

thinking a correspondence on any literary subject dry or sterile.

I therefore imagine that your zeal for the Newtonian system, which you first established in France, by the elegant manner in which you explained its principles, will induce you to cast a look upon my more recent attempts to contribute to its advancement.

My aim is to fix the return of the Comet predicted by Halley: and I have done this by applying my general theory of the irregularities in the motions of the celestial bodies, produced by their mutual action upon each other. Annexed to this is the Memoir, which I read upon that subject, at our public meeting last St. Martin's day. As it has been attacked with great acrimony in several journals, I thought it right to answer my critics, before the publication of the whole of my theory. I have the honour of submitting to your judgment this second Memoir, as well as the first. When the whole work is printed it shall be presented with the same zeal.

I am, with the highest esteem, and that respect which is necessarily connected with it,

Sir, your most humble,

and most obedient servant,

CLAIRAUT.

L E T T E R IV.

Mr. de Voltaire's Answer to Mr. Clairaut's Letter.

YOUR letter, Sir, has given me a pleasure equal to the esteem, with which I am inspired by your works. Your contest with the geometers on the subject of the Comet, seems to me the war of the Gods in Olympus; while upon earth we have a battle between dogs and cats.—I am
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frightened when I reflect upon the immensity of your labour. I remember that formerly, when I applied to the Newtonian Theory, I never retired from study without finding my health impaired:—my organs cannot bear so much application as your's. You was born a geometrician, and it was only chance that made me a disciple of Newton. Your last work must certainly do honour to France. It is impossible the English should have said every thing. Newton partly founded his laws upon those of Kepler, and you have improved upon those of Newton. 'Tis certainly an admirable discovery to be able to determine the irregularities which the attraction of the larger planets occasions in the course of the comets. These stars which our fathers, the Greeks, knew only by their quality of being *hairy*, according to the etymology of their name, or mischievous as we speak of *Clodion the hairy*, are now subjected to your calculation, as well as all the other planets of the solar system. However, a man must be very hard to please, who would insist upon the return of a Comet being predicted to a minute, in the same manner as an eclipse of the Sun or Moon. In those immense distances, and in the complication of causes by which the return of a Comet may be accelerated or retarded, we must content ourselves with something *near* the truth. Besides, can we know precisely the quantity of matter in Jupiter or Saturn? To me it appears impossible. I should think, if you were allowed a month's usance on the return of a Comet, as is allowed on bills of exchange that come from a great distance, the favour would not be very great. But when it is acknowledged, that you do honour to France and to the human mind, you receive no more than

than is strictly your due. Would to God that our friend Moreau Maupertuis had cultivated his art like you; that he had confined himself to predict the return of comets, instead of elevating his soul to look into futurity; dissecting the brains of giants to investigate the nature of the soul; incrusting people with pitch in order to cure them of every kind of disease; persecuting Koenig, and dying in the arms of two Capuchins!

I am sorry however that you distinguish by the name of Newtonians, those who acknowledge the truth of Newton's discoveries: Geometricians might, with as great propriety, be called Euclidians. Truth has no party name; error may admit epithets of raillery: we say *Jansenists*, *Molinists*, *Quietists*, *Anabaptists*, to distinguish different sorts of blind people. Sects have names, but truth is—Truth.

Heaven bless the printer, who put the *altercations* of the comet, instead of the alterations! He was more in the right than he was aware: every truth produces *altercations*.

I too, in my turn, might with great reason complain of those who charged me with being an enemy to my country, because I was the first in France who ventured to adopt the system of Newton. But I have received so many other favours of the same kind, that this escaped me in the croud.

I have now given over measuring my *curves*, excepting such as my newly-invented sowing-machines describe at the extremity of their radii: the result is—a little corn. But while I was killing myself at Paris, in composing epic poems, tragedies, and histories, I reaped only tares. The culture of lands is more pleasing than the cultivation

tion of letters: I find more good sense, and much more honesty in my labourers and vine dressers, than in the literary pedlars.

I cultivate the earth,—to that we must return at last. I have produced some plenty in the pleasantest and poorest country I ever beheld. It is a fine experiment in philosophy to make four ears of corn grow where nature gave only two. The academies of Ceres and Pomona are well worth the others.

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Fortunatus & ille Deos qui novit agrestes.

L E T T E R V.

To Mr. de la Noue, Author of the Tragedy of
MAHOMET II.

YOUR tragedy, Sir, came to Cirey just as the Kœnigs and the Bernouillis set out from it. The great truths are leaving us, but in their stead, we have grand sentiments and fine verses, which are fully equivalent to truths. I believe you are the first among the moderns who have been at once an actor and a tragic poet; for Latuillerie, who gave *Hercules* and *Soliman*, under his own name, was not their author; and besides, those two pieces are now as though they had never been. Do you know the epitaph of that Latuillerie?

Ci git un Fiacre nommé Jean
Qui croyait avoir fait Hercule & Soliman.

Beneath this stone
The Coachman John
Interred lies,
Who thought
He wrote
Two Tragedies.

The

The double merit of being (if I may venture the expression) at once the painter and the picture, was never held in honour except in ancient Greece; among that happy people to whom we are indebted for all the arts; who knew how to reward and honour talents of every kind, and whom we neither esteem nor imitate as we ought to do. Your work sparkles with flights of genius, and strokes of fancy:—'tis almost of a new kind. It is true, the language of tragedy ought not to be too bold; but on the other hand, have not the French poets been often a little too timid? We will allow that a polite courtier, or a young Princess, ought to express their sentiments only in an easy graceful stile, but in my opinion the foreign heroes we introduce, Asiatics, Americans, or Turks, may assume a tone more lofty, more sublime, *major e longinquo*. I should choose to hear from the mouth of Mahomet the Second, a language resembling that of Mahomet the Prophet, bold, metaphorical, and full of images—These superb ideas are proper for their characters, and it was in this stile they actually spoke. It is said that the conqueror of Constantinople, on entering the Church of St. Sophia, which he had just converted into a mosque, repeated two sublime verses of the Persian Sadi.—*The imperial palace is fallen—the birds ominous of carnage have been heard uttering their cries on the towers of Constantinople*. It is to no purpose to say that such beauties of diction are peculiar to epic poetry; they who speak in this manner, know not that the stile of Homer was imitated by Sophocles and Euripides. These passages in the epic stile, artfully interwoven with other more simple beauties, are like those flashes of lightning which we sometimes

see inflaming the horizon, and mixing with the soft and steady lustre of a serene evening.

All the other nations, or I am deceived, are fond of this striking, figurative way of speaking. The Greeks, the Latins, the Arabians, the Italians, the English, the Spaniards, all object to us that our poetry is too prosaic. I do not desire a poet to pass the limits of nature, but to strengthen and embellish it. Who admires more than I, the pieces of the illustrious Racine? Who knows more of them by heart? But should I take it amiss if Bajazet, for example, sometimes express himself in more elevated language?*

Give me leave to ask you, Sir, whether in the style in which the whole part of that Turkish prince is written, you can discover him to be any other than a Frenchman, who calls his Turkish mistress *Madame*, and expresses himself with elegance and mildness? Do not you wish for something more manly, more sublime, more animated in the expressions of this young Ottoman, who sees himself between *Roxana* and the empire, between *Atalida* and death? This is nearly what Peter Corneille, at the first representation of *Bajazet*, said to an old man from whom I had the anecdote: "All this is very tender and pathetic, and well written, but still it is a Frenchman who speaks." You are sensible, Sir, that this slight reflection does not, in the least, diminish the respect, which every lover of the French tongue owes to the name of Racine. They who wish that Raphael and Poussin had given more

* In the original there are several lines inserted from *Bajazet* to prove the truth of the author's position, but we have omitted them, as being neither interesting nor intelligible to the English reader.

colouring to their paintings, do not admire them the less on that account. In general, perhaps, that meagreness, so usual in the French versification, that total want of grand ideas, is in some measure the consequence of the restraint we labour under in our phrases and rhyme. We should be bolder, and rhyme only to the ear. I ventured to give this opinion twenty years ago. If a line ends with the word *terre*, you may be sure to see *guerre* at the end of the next; and yet *terre* is not pronounced differently from *pere* or *mere*. Why then should we hesitate to make these words rhyme to the eye, as they do to the ear. We ought, in my opinion, to reflect, that the ear can judge of sounds only, and not of the figure of characters. Obstacles ought not to be unnecessarily multiplied;—such superfluous restraints cut off a number of beauties. We ought to be bound by strict laws, but not subjected to an abject slavery. The English are of this opinion. But that I may not draw out my letter to an immoderate length, I will say no more to you about style. Besides I have a great deal to say on the story which makes the subject of your piece. I do not know any more difficult to be treated; it is conformable neither to history or nature.

One Bandelli, a Monk, took it into his head to disfigure the history of the great Mahomet the Second, by a multitude of incredible fictions.—Among other things, he inserted in it the fable of the death of *Irene*, which has been copied by twenty authors. Yet it is certain that Mahomet never had a mistress known among Christians by the name of *Irene*:—that the Janisaries never mutinied against him, either on his wife's account or for any other cause, and that that prince, whose

prudence,

prudence, wisdom, and political talents were equal to his intrepidity, was incapable of committing this action of a frantic idiot, with which he has been so ridiculously reproached in our histories.— This tale ought to be ranked with that of the fourteen *Scoglans*, whose bellies, it is pretended, he caused to be ript open in order to discover which of them had eaten his figs or his melons. Conquered nations always impute the most horrid and absurd actions to their conquerors; 'tis the revenge of fools and slaves.

In writing the history of Charles XII. I found it necessary to consult some historical works concerning the Turks. Among the rest, I lately read the history of the Ottoman empire, written at Constantinople, by Prince Cantimer, Vaivode of Moldavia. Neither he nor any Turkish or Arabian author, deigns even to mention the fable of *Irene*; he contents himself with representing Mahomet as the greatest and wisest man of the age. He shews that Mahomet having made himself master of one half of Constantinople by an assault, which was given by a mistake, and having received the other by capitulation, religiously observed the treaty, and even preserved the greatest part of the churches in the other half of the city, which subsisted three generations after him.

But that he wanted to marry a Christian, that he murdered her, &c. these are things which were never thought of in his own times. What I say here, I say as an historian, not as a poet; I am very far from condemning you. You have followed the popular prejudice, and popular prejudice is enough for a painter and a poet. What would have become of Virgil and Homer, had they been captiously questioned concerning their facts?

facts? A falsehood which produces a striking situation on the stage, is in that case preferable to all the archives in the universe.

L E T T E R VI.

In reply to the Duke de Bouillon, who had written a letter in verse to him, on the subject of an edition of Corneille's works, published for the benefit of that great man's grand-daughter.

I CAN compare your Lordship only to the Marquis de la Fare, who began to feel his talents for poetry nearly at your time of life, when certain other and more valuable talents were beginning to decline, and to remind him that there were still other pleasures to be enjoyed.

His first verses were dedicated to Love, and his second to the Abbé de Chaulieu.—Your first verses are addressed to me; this is not right, but I am the more indebted to you.—You tell me that I have triumphed over all my enemies; 'tis you that make me triumph.

Aux pieds de mes rochers, aux creux de mes vallons,
Pourrais-je regretter les rives de la Seine?

La fille de Corneille écoute mes leçons;

Je suis chanté par un Turenne.

J'ai pour moi deux grandes maisons,

Chez Bellone & chez Melpomene :

A l'abri de ces deux beaux noms,

On peut negliger les Frérons,

Ou rire tout haut de leur haine.

C'est quelque chose d'être heureux ;

Mais c'est un grand plaisir de le dire à l'envie,

De l'abattre à nos pieds, & d'en rire à ses yeux :

Qu'un souper est délicieux,

Quand on brave, en buvant, les griffes de l'harpie !

Que

Que des frères Berthier les cris injurieux

Font une plaisante harmonie !

Que c'est pour un amant un passe-tems bien doux

D'embrasser la beauté qui subjugue son ame !

Et d'affubler encor du sel de l'épigramme

Un rival fâcheux & jaloux !

Cela n'est pas chrétien ; j'en conveniens avec vous ;

Mais les gens le font-ils ! Le monde est une guerre :

On a des ennemis en tout genre, en tous lieux ;

Tout mortel combat sur la terre :

Le Diable avec Michel combattit dans les Cieux,

On cabale à la cour, à l'église, à l'armée :

Au parnasse on se bat pour un peu de fumée,

Pour un nom, pour du vent : & je conclus au bout

Qu'il faut jouir en paix ; & se moquer de tout.

Where rise my rocks, and hollow valleys bend,

Can I regret the banks of winding Seine ?

My lessons, Corneille's daughter deigns t' attend,

A Turenne in my honour pours his strain ;

While thus protected by those mighty names,

So dear to Mars and to the tragic queen,

The Freron's hatred no attention claims,

Or I may laugh at their malicious spleen.

Felicity is sure no empty dream,

But to be happy, spite of Envy's frown,

To strike her prostrate, make her rage Mirth's theme,

That such is bliss, what sceptic dares disown ?

What poignant pleasure crowns the genial feast,

When o'er our cups we brave the harpies fangs ;

What harmony thrills through my raptur'd breast,

When the two Berthiers' cries bespeak their envious
pangs !

How pleasing to the lover to carefs

The nymph who binds his soul in tender chains,

To see his rival writhing in distress,

And laugh at all his jealousies and pains.

'Tis

'Tis true, not such the rules religion gives,
 But what's the world, except one scene of war?
 Amidst his foes on earth each mortal lives,
 Nor heaven itself did its wild ravage spare.

The court, the church, the army, all intrigue,
 Parnassus' self nor peace nor concord knows;
 A name, a breath, there breaks the firmest league,
 A puff of smoke turns dearest friends to foes.

Then let's of bliss in peace enjoy our share,
 The smiling bowl of pleasure ceaseless quaff;
 Give mirth the rein, defy corroding care,
 And at the world and all its follies laugh.

L E T T E R VII.

To the Duke de la Valiere, Grand Falconer of
 France, on Urceus Codrus.

YOUR mode of proceeding, my Lord Duke, is in the style of antient chivalry; you take up arms in defence of a man who has exposed himself to peril in your train; but the slight mistake into which you have led me, serves to display your profound erudition. Few Grand Falconers would have quoted the *Sermones festivi*, printed in 1502. Raillery apart, it is an exploit worthy your magnanimity to place yourself in the breach in my stead.

You told me in your first letter, that *Urceus Codrus* was a great preacher, in your second you inform me, that he was a great libertine, but however that he was not a Cordelier. You ask pardon of St. Francis d'Assise, and the whole seraphic order for the mistake into which you led me; I take the penance upon myself; but it still remains an indisputable truth that the *mysteries* represented at the *Hotel de Bourgogne* were much

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more

more decent than the generality of the sermons in the sixteenth century.—This is the point on which the question turns.

Let us place whom we will in the stead of Urceus Codrus, and we shall gain our cause. There is not a single expression in the mysteries, which is alarming either to modesty or piety.—It is impossible that a society of forty persons, who compose and act pieces on sacred subjects in French, should agree to disgrace their performances with expressions of indecency, which would disgust the public; and occasion the theatre to be shut up. But an ignorant preacher who composes his own sermons, and is an utter stranger to good breeding, may interlard them with a few ridiculous expressions, especially when he preaches in Latin. Such for example were the Cordelier Maillard's sermons, which I have no doubt are to be met with in your immense and valuable library. Look into his sermon for the second Thursday in Lent, and you will see how he apostrophises the counsellors wives, who wore gold lace on their cloaths: *You say that you are clad according to your conditions; away to all the devils your conditions! and you too, my ladies. You will say to me perhaps, our husbands do not give us these fine gowns, we earn them by the labour of our bodies; away with the labour of your bodies to thirty thousand devils, my ladies.*

I give you only this passage from Friar Maillard, that I may spare your modesty; but if you have a mind to take the trouble of searching for others still stronger in the same author, you will find some worthy of Urceus Codrus. Fathers André and Menot were very famous for the turpitude of their expressions: the pulpit, it is true, was not always sullied with obscenities: but for

a long time the sermons were in nothing superior to the mysteries of the *Hotel de Bourgogne*.

It must be acknowledged, that the preachers of the pretended reformed religion were the first in France who inserted in their discourses any portion of rationality. And this was because we must necessarily reason, when we wish to change mens ideas. This reasoning, however, was very far from true eloquence. The pulpit, the bar, the theatre, philosophy, literature, theology, every species of composition among us, was with very few exceptions, in a state much inferior to the pieces played at the fair at present.

Universal good taste did not establish its empire till the age of Louis XIV.—It was this determined me to give a slight sketch of that glorious period, and you have remarked that in that history, the age is my hero, even more than Louis XIV. himself, whatever respect and gratitude we may owe to his memory.

It is true, that in general our neighbours were nearly in the same predicament with ourselves. How was it possible that men who were incessantly preaching could preach so ill? What could be the reason that even the Italians who had so long emerged from barbarism, in almost every other respect, were, generally speaking, when in the pulpit, merely harlequins in surplices, while Tasso's Jerusalem equalled the Iliad, and Orlando Furioso surpassed the Odyssey; and at a time when Pastor Fido was a poem, for which there was no model among the antients;—and Raphael and Paul Veronese performed in reality what is imagined of Zeuxis and Apelles?

Doubtless, my Lord Duke, you have perused the history of the Council of Trent; I believe there

is not a duke or peer in France but reads some sessions of it every morning.—You have certainly remarked the sermon preached at the opening of the Council, by the Bishop of Bitonto.

He begins with proving the Council to be necessary : 1. Because several Councils have deposed Kings and Emperors. 2. Because in the *Æneid* Jupiter assembles a Council of the Gods. 3. Because at the creation of man and the adventure of the Tower of Babel, God seems to have acted as if in Council. He then goes on to assert, that all Prelates ought to assemble in Trent, as in the Trojan Horse. Lastly, he observes, That the gate of Paradise and the Council is the same ; and that there flows from it living waters with which the Fathers ought to water their hearts, even as dry lands are watered ; otherwise the Holy Spirit would open their mouths, as he did the mouths of Balaam and Caiphas.

All this was preached before the States General of Christendom. What divine prejudice in favour of a Council ? The sermon of St. Anthony of Padua to the fishes, is still more famous in Italy than that of Mr. de Bitonto. We may therefore excuse our Friar André and our Friar Garasse, and all our pulpit merry andrews of the 16th and 17th centuries, if they were no better than their masters the Italians.

But what was the source of this absurd barbarism which so universally overspread Italy in the time of Tasso ; France in the time of Montagne, Charron and the Chancellor de L'Hopital ; England in the age of Bacon ? How happened it that those men of genius did not reform their age ? The blame lay with the colleges in which the youth were educated, and the monkish and theological

theological spirit which finished what the colleges had sketched. A genius like Tasso read Virgil and produced the *Jerusalem*. A Machiavel read Terence and composed the *Mandragore*; but what Monk, what Doctor, read Cicero and Demosthenes? An unhappy scholar rendered stupid, by having been forced during four long years to learn John Despautere by heart, and afterwards crazy by maintaining a thesis *on the universality, of the part of a thing, or a thought*, and upon the Categories, publicly received his cap and his credentials of insanity, and then went to preach before an auditory, three-fourths of whom were greater idiots and worse educated than himself.

The people listened to those theological farces with necks outstretched, eyes fixed, mouths open; like children listening to stories of witches, and then went home in a state of contrition.

The same spirit which led them to the drolleries of the *Foolish Mother*, drew them to those sermons, and they were the more assiduous in their attendance, as the entertainment cost them nothing. For, lay an imposition upon masses, as was proposed in the minority of Louis XIV. and not a single person would hear mass.

It was not till about the time of Coffeteau and Balzac, that a few preachers ventured to give rational, though dull discourses,—in a word, Bourdaloue was the first preacher in Europe who displayed any share of eloquence in the pulpit. I cannot help quoting here the testimony of Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, who says in his Memoirs, that when on his travels in France, he was astonished at those sermons, and that Bourdaloue reformed the English preachers as well as the French,

Bourdaloue

Bourdaloue was almost the Corneille of the pulpit, as Maffillon has since been its Racine:—not that I put an act half prophane on a level with a ministry almost sacred; nor that I compare the moderate difficulty of composing a good sermon, to the prodigious and inexpressible difficulty of writing a good tragedy: but I say that Bourdaloue aimed at arguing like Corneille; and Maffillon studied to be as elegant in prose as Racine was in verse.

It is true that Bourdaloue, as well as Corneille, was frequently reproached with being too much of the pleader, by aiming rather at proving his point than affecting his audience, and with adducing sometimes weak proofs.—Maffillon, on the contrary, thought it better to paint and to move;—he imitated Racine as closely as he can be imitated in prose, though preaching all the while that dramatic authors are damned: for it is expedient that every apothecary should extol his own unguent and condemn his neighbour's. His style is pure, and his pictures pathetic.

The misfortune of sermons is, that they are too often declamations on contrary sides of the same question. The same man who last Sunday affirmed that there was no felicity in grandeur, that crowns are thorns, that courts are only filled with illustrious wretches, that joy is only spread on the face of the poor; on the Sunday following, preaches that the people are condemned to affliction and tears, and that the grandees of the earth are plunged in dangerous delights.

In Advent, they tell us, that God is incessantly employed in supplying all our wants; and in Lent, that the earth is cursed. These common-place

place topics carry them on to the end of the year through a series of dull and flowery phrases.

In England the preachers have taken another turn, which would by no means be suitable to us. Clarke's collection of sermons is the most profound book of metaphysics that ever was written. One might almost say that he preached only for philosophers: and even those philosophers might, at the end of each period, have required of him a long explanation. And the *Frenchman in London**, who admits of no proof, would soon have left the preacher there.—His collection makes an excellent book, which very few people are capable of understanding. What a difference between ages and nations! And how remote from Friar Garasse and Friar André are the Clarkes and the Maffillons!

In my application to the study of history, I have constantly derived from it this profitable reflection, that the age in which we live is, of all others, the most enlightened, notwithstanding our wretched books, and the multitude of insipid periodical pamphlets, as it is the happiest, notwithstanding our transitory calamities.—For what man of letters is there but knows that we must date the rise of good taste in France from the time of *China* and the *Provincial Letters*? And who that has the least tincture of historical knowledge, can point out a happier time from the days of Clovis, than the period elapsed since Louis XIV. took the reins into his own hands, to the moment I have the honour of speaking to

* Alluding to the hero of a French farce, called *Le François à Londres*, *The Frenchman in London*. T.

you?

you? I defy the most dissatisfied mortal living to tell me what age he would prefer to our own.

We ought to be just:—it must be allowed, for instance, that a geometrician at twenty-four years of age knows much more of the science than Des Cartes ever did; and that a country curate preaches more rationally than the grand almoner of Louis XII. The nation is better informed, style in general has been improved, consequently our minds are now better formed than they were formerly.

You will tell me that the age is now on the decline, and that at present genius and talents are much more scarce than they were in the glorious times of Louis XIV. Yes, genius sinks, and naturally will sink, but our lights are multiplied. A thousand painters in the time of Salvator Rosa were not worth Raphael and Michael Angelo; but the thousand middling painters formed by those great men, composed a school infinitely superior to what they found established in their days.

We have indeed at present, when our fine age is drawing to a close, neither a Maffillon, a Bourdaloue, a Bossuet, nor a Fenelon, but the dullest of all our preachers is a Demosthenes in comparison of those who filled our pulpits from the time of St. Remi to the days of Friar Garasse.

There is a wider difference between the most trifling of our tragedies and the pieces of Jodelle, than there is between the *Atthalie* of Racine and the *Maccabees* of La Motte, or the *Moses* of Abbé Nadal. In a word, in all the productions of genius, our artists are far inferior to those who lived at the beginning of the great age, and in its best days; but the nation is now superior to what it was then. We are overflowed, it is true, with

with a deluge of pitiful pamphlets, and mine help to make up the stream; but they may be considered only as a swarm of gnats and caterpillars, that prove the abundance of fruits and flowers: you never see these insects in barren lands;—and remark, that in this immense croud of little pieces, all effaced by one another, and all at the end of a few days precipitated into eternal oblivion, there is sometimes more taste and delicacy, than you would find in all the books written before the *Provincial Letters*.

So rich is our present stock of genius, compared with an indigence of more than twelve hundred years.

If you now examine our manners, our laws, our government and our society, you will find my account to be just. I date from the moment that Louis XIV. assumed the reins, and I ask the most peevish malecontent, the most gloomy panegyrist of past ages, if he will dare to compare the times in which we live, to the days when the Archbishop of Paris went to the Parliament with a poignard in his pocket? Will he prefer the preceding age when the Prime Minister was pistolled in the Court of the Louvre, and his wife condemned to be burnt as a witch? Ten or twelve years of the reign of the great Henry IV. appear to be happy, after forty years of abominations and horrors, which make the hair stand on end; but during the few years which the best of Princes employed in healing our wounds, that still bled on every side, the poison of *the League* still continued to effect the minds of the people: families were divided; the manners were savage; fanaticism prevailed every where, except at Court. Commerce was beginning to spring up, but its

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advantages

advantages were not yet perceptible: society was destitute of whatever could render it pleasing, and the towns were without police: men in general were in want of the comforts of life; and to compleat the misfortune, Henry IV. was detested. That great man used to say to the Duke de Sully, *They do not know me, they will regret me.*

Go back through a hundred thousand murders, committed in the name of God, and over the ruins of our cities laid in ashes, to the time of Francis I. and you will see Italy stained with our blood, one of our kings a prisoner in Madrid, and the enemy in the midst of our provinces.

Louis XII. was stiled the *Father of his People*; but the children of that father were very unhappy, and he was so himself; driven out of Italy, duped by the Pope, vanquished by Henry VIII. and forced to pay a sum of money to his conqueror to be permitted to marry his sister; he was a good king over an unpolished people, who were poor, and without either arts or manufactures. His capital was only a confused collection of houses built of wood, straw, and plaister, and almost all covered with thatch. It is doubtless, better to live under a good king, who rules over an enlightened and opulent nation, though artful and censorious.

The farther back you go, the more savage you will find every thing; and hence it is our history is so disgusting, that it has been found necessary to compose chronological abridgments of it in columns, where every thing necessary is to be found, and every thing useless is omitted, in order to render it supportable to such of our countrymen as are desirous of knowing in what year the Sorbonne was founded, and to inform the
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the curious who doubt whether the equestrian statue in the Gothic Cathedral of Paris was erected for *Philip de Valois*, or *Philip the Handsome*.

Do not let us dissimulate ;—we have existed only about six score years : laws, police, military discipline, commerce, the marine, the fine arts, magnificence, genius, taste, all began with Louis XIV. and several useful arts are yet but in the way to perfection. This is what I wanted to insinuate, that before his reign every thing was in a barbarous state, and that the pulpit was as much so as the rest.

Urceus Codrus was perhaps not worth speaking so long to you about, but he has furnished me with some reflections which may be useful, if you will have the goodness to revise them.

L E T T E R VIII.

From Mr. L——*, Advocate † of the Parliament of Paris, to Mr. De Voltaire.

Paris, 19th Feb. 1767.

I WILLINGLY conform, Sir, to a very laudable custom, which I see pretty generally established

* This is Mr. Linguet, who has since been exceedingly persecuted, and at length obliged to leave France on account of his pleadings and writings, the latter of which are very voluminous. Besides his *Theorie de loix*, and other pieces, he is the author of a periodical work which for some time he published in England, under the title of *Annales Politiques, Civiles & Littéraires, du 18ieme Siecle* ; a very interesting part of which has lately appeared in English under the title of *Political and Philosophical Speculations on some of the distinguishing Characteristics of the present Century*, &c. in one vol. 12mo. T.

† We have observed that the generality of our translators from the French render the word *Avocat*, *Counsellor* ; but

among young authors who transmit to you a copy of their works, and court the honour of obtaining a place for their productions in your library.

It is very natural, that the first fruits of a tree should be gathered by the hand which contributed most to fix its roots. The advancement of reason and of taste among us is almost wholly due to you. They who have profited by it, cannot dispense with giving you a mark of their gratitude. The protection our Chancellors give to literature entitles them to a copy of every new publication. The same homage is due to you by the same title.

Le Dieu du goût, ce Dieu sensible & délicat,
Dont vous avez si bien fait connaître l'Empire,
Vous a remis les sceaux de cet état.
Malgré les cris de la satire

Il vous en a nommé le premier magistrat.

Ce poste la pour la finance,
Ne vaut pas tant comme je crois
Que le garde des sceaux de France.
Et ce n'est pas la seule différence
Qui distingue ces deux emplois.
Chacun peut se croire capable
De bien garder ces derniers sceaux.
Aussi voit-on à ce poste honorable

Prétendre à chaque instant des concurrens nouveaux.
Mais ici le cas est tout autre,
Vous n'aurez jamais de rivaux
Assez hardis pour demander le vôtre.

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this is a mistake.—The Parliament of Paris, as well as all the other Parliaments of France, is a court of justice, and has a President or Chief Judge, and several other inferior Judges, who have the title of Counsellors (*Conseillers*).—They who have the privilege of pleading at the bar are styled Advocates (*Avocats*) as is the case in Scotland, where the Court of Session has a great affinity to the French Parliament. T.

The God, whose empire you maintain,
The God of Taste, has deem'd it fit,
In spite of Satire's rage, to name
The Chancellor of Wit.

The seals of France I'll fairly own
In profit, your's will far outweigh,
Yet not in this one point alone
The difference will be found to lay;

Conceited Lawyers every hour
We see this other post desire,
Whilst none to rival you in power
Will ever wish, or dare t'aspire.

It is very true that it exposes you from time to time to troublesome messages, and the perusal of very dull performances; but I suppose you make use of the privilege of other Chancellors, and take care not to read all the petitions that are presented to you; and should you even think yourself in conscience obliged to it, after all it would be only one of the inconveniences of your office, and you know there is no empolymment but has its mortifications. Sinécures are no where to be found but in the Church.

If for my sake you derogate from the prerogatives of your office, and deign to cast a glance upon the *Theory of Civil Laws*, you will perhaps find in it a great many things that are new, but there will be likewise not a few which you have certainly thought of before. I have read and understood you sufficiently to be assured that you will not blame me for having combated the opinions of Mr. de Montesquieu. I have done justice to his great genius, and at the same time have attacked his errors. He is a brilliant genius, subject to frequent eclipses. I am far from saying of him
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all I might have said. I have materials enough remaining for more than another volume. I shall find a proper place for them in the sequel of my work, if ever I compleat the grand object I have formed, of attacking in its very source the multiplicity of laws, tribunals, customs, &c. and of proving that simplicity and uniformity are, or ought to be, the springs of policy, and that complication is the parent of monsters of every kind. You will easily conceive that in the course of developing such principles, it will be frequently requisite to refute Mr. de Montesquieu, and this is what seems to be as easy as it is necessary.

I think with you, Sir, that literature, the arts, and every thing that relates to them, are inventions highly useful for the rich; excellent resources for men of leisure who enjoy superfluity. These are playthings which serve to amuse them in the state of perpetual infancy, in which they are kept by their opulence. Their vivacity is employed on these trifles with which they amuse themselves. The attention they pay to them, prevents their making use of their strength to more dangerous purposes. But I am firmly of opinion that the case is entirely different with that other, and infinitely more numerous portion of mankind, who are called the people. These intellectual playthings are to them poisoned amulets, which spoil and corrupt them without remedy. The actual state of society condemns them to have only hands;—all is lost the moment they are put in a condition of perceiving that they have a capacity for thinking.

Could one of these two divisions of mankind be singly illuminated; were it possible to intercept all the rays which proceed from the little to the
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great, and to cover with everlasting darkness only that of the two which is no longer useful than while it is totally blind, I would willingly applaud the labours of the philosophers and their partizans. But take notice, Sir, the sun cannot rise upon the first, without a twilight extending to the second, however distant it may be; and this is no sooner enlightened, than it necessarily inclines to appreciate, or to mix itself with the other. Hence it follows that light is fatal to both; and that an obscurity, in which they live quietly, each within its respective limits, is infinitely preferable to a state of illumination, by which they only learn reciprocally to despise or detest one another.

This, Sir, is my small profession of literary faith, to which I shall ever be attached, even to martyrdom.

L E T T E R IX.

Answer to the Advocate Linguet, on Montesquieu and Grotius.

I AM of your opinion, Sir, that there is more than one inadvertency in the *Spirit of Laws*. There are very few people who read attentively. It has not been observed that all Montesquieu's quotations are false. He quotes the pretended political testament of Cardinal de Richelieu, and makes him say, Chap. VI. Book III. *that if there be found among the people, an honest man who is unfortunate, he ought not to be employed*. That testament, which besides is not worth being quoted, says just the contrary; and that not in the sixth, but in the fourth chapter.

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He makes Plutarch say, that women are incapable of real love. He does not consider that this sentiment is put into the mouth of one of Plutarch's Interlocutors, and that that Greek is severely reprimanded by the philosopher Daphneus, in whose favour Plutarch decides. That dialogue is wholly consecrated to the honour of women; but Montesquieu read superficially, and judged too hastily.

The same negligence has made him say, *that the Grand Seignior is not obliged by law to keep his word.—That all low trades were infamous in Greece.—That he laments the blindness of Francis I. who rejected the proposal of Christopher Columbus for the discovery of the Indies.* You will remark that Columbus had discovered America before Francis I. was born.

The vivacity of his genius makes him assert in the same place, Book IV. Chap. XIX. *that the council of Spain was guilty of false policy in prohibiting the use of gold in gilding and embroidery.* Such a law, says he, *would be similar to one we may suppose past in Holland, prohibiting cinnamon.* He does not reflect that the Spaniards had no manufactures; that they would have been obliged to purchase their stuffs and gold lace from other nations, and that the Dutch could buy cinnamon only at their own markets, because it grows no where but in their dominions.

Almost all the examples that he adduces, are taken from unknown nations, in the remotest parts of Asia, upon the credit of ill-informed or lying travellers.

He affirms, *that there is no navigable river in Persia, except the Cyrus*; he forgets that they have the Tigris, the Euphrates, the Oxus, the Araxes, the Phrasis, the Cyrus, and even the Indus, which

which has long flowed under the laws of the Kings of Persia. Chardin, in his third volume, assures us that the river Zenderoude, which runs through Ispahan, is as large as the Seine at Paris, and that it often drowns the houses on the quays of the city.

Unfortunately the whole system of the *Spirit of Laws* is built upon an antithesis which we find to be false. He maintains that *Monarchies are established upon the principle of honour, and Republics upon that of virtue*; and in order to support this witticism, he says (Book III. Ch. VII.) *the nature of honour is to require preferences, and distinctions; therefore honour, from the nature of the thing, is properly placed in Monarchical Governments.*—He ought to reflect that from *the nature of the thing*, the Romans, in the time of the republic, intrigued for the Prætorship, the Consulship, the Triumph, Crowns and Statues.

I have taken the liberty to point out several other mistakes of the same kind in that book, which in other respects is exceedingly valuable. I shall not be surprised however, if that celebrated work should appear to you to be more filled with epigrams than sound reasoning; and yet it abounds with so much wit and genius, that it will always be preferred to Grotius and Puffendorf:—their misfortune is to be tiresome; they are rather heavy than grave.

Grotius, whom you attack with so much justice, extorted from the age in which he lived a reputation which he was far from deserving. His *Treatise on the Christian Religion* is not esteemed by men of real learning. He there says, Book I. Ch. XXII. *That the general conflagration is foretold in Hystaspes and the Sybilline Oracle.* To their
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testimony he adds that of Ovid and Lucan.— He quotes Lycophron to prove the history of Jonas.

If you would form a judgment of the character of Grotius's genius, read his harangue to Queen *Anne of Austria* on the subject of her pregnancy. He compares her to the *Jewess Anne*, who had children in her old age. He says, that the dolphins, when they frisk upon the water, announce an approaching calm, and for the same reason the little Dauphin* that leaped in her womb, prognosticated a cessation of the troubles of the kingdom.

I could quote you an hundred examples of the same college eloquence in this Grotius, who has been so much admired. Time is required to determine the true value of books and establish reputation.

You have no reason to fear that people of the lower rank will read Puffendorf and Grotius; they are not fond of dull works. They would rather choose, if they were capable, to read some chapters of the *Spirit of Laws*, which are level to every capacity, because they are written in a very easy and agreeable manner. But let us make a distinction in what you call the *people*, between the professions which require a decent education, and those which require only the labour of the hands and daily fatigue. Of this last class, which is the most numerous, the sole relaxation and pleasure is to go to high mass and the alehouse, because there they hear singing and sing them-

* This pun cannot be conveyed in English. *Dauphin*, which is the title of the King's eldest son in France, is likewise the French word for *Dolphin*. T.

selves.

selves. But for artizans of a higher order, whose professions require a considerable degree of reflection to perfect their taste and extend their knowledge; they begin to apply themselves to reading all over Europe. You have hardly any idea of the Swiss at Paris, but from those who are porters at noblemens gates, or the characters which Moliere has introduced speaking an unintelligible jargon in some farces: but the Parisians would be amazed, were they to see the manufacturers in almost every town in Switzerland, especially in Geneva, devoting to study the time which cannot be consecrated to labour. No, Sir, all is not lost, *the moment the people are put into a condition of perceiving that they have a capacity for thinking.* On the contrary all is lost when they are treated like a herd of bulls; for, sooner or later, they butt you with their horns. Do you believe that the people read and reasoned in the time of the civil wars between the red and white rose in England; in that which brought Charles I. to the block; in the horrors of the *Armagnacs* and *Bourguignons*, or even in those of the *League*? The people, ignorant and ferocious, were spirited on by a few fanatic Doctors, who cried out, "Kill all in the name of God." I would defy Cromwell now to turn England upside down by his jargon of an *Energumen*; John of Leyden to make himself King of Munster; and Cardinal de Retz to form barricades at Paris. In short, Sir, you ought not to prohibit men from reading:—you would lose too much by it.

L E T T E R X.

Answer to the Letter of M.L.C.

[Dated 23^d December, 1768.]

IF you mean to apply seriously to the study of nature, give me leave, Sir, to tell you that you ought to set out with a resolution of forming no system. You must imitate the Boyles, the Galileos, and the Newtons; examine, weigh, calculate, and measure, but never guess. Newton never formed a system; he saw and made others see, but he has not substituted his own imaginations in the place of truth. What our eyes and the mathematics demonstrate to us, must be considered as true; but in every thing else we have only to say, *we know not*.

It is indisputable, that the tides exactly follow the course of the Sun and Moon: it is mathematically demonstrated, that those two bodies gravitate upon our globe, and in what proportion they gravitate. From thence Newton hath not only calculated the action of the Sun and Moon upon the tides of the Ocean, but likewise the action of the Earth and Sun upon the waters of the Moon, supposing such waters to exist. Indeed it is strange that a man should have been able to make such discoveries; but that man made use of the lights of the mathematics which are the only unerring lights.

Take care therefore, Sir, not to suffer yourself to be seduced by the imagination, which ought to be sent back to poetry, and wholly excluded from natural philosophy.—To imagine a central
fire

fire in order to explain the flowing of the sea, is like solving a problem by a madrigal.

That all bodies contain fire, is a truth of which we are not permitted to doubt; it exists even in ice, as is demonstrated by experience. But that there is a furnace exactly in the centre of the earth, is a thing which no person can know; which is by no means probable, and which consequently cannot be admitted in natural philosophy.

Even if this fire did exist, it would not serve to explain either the high tides at the Equinoxes and Solstices, nor those at the full Moon; nor would it furnish a reason why those seas that do not communicate with the ocean have no tides, nor why the tides are retarded according to the course of the Moon, &c. There is therefore not the least reason for admitting this pretended fire to be the cause of the swelling of the waters.

You ask, Sir, what becomes of the waters discharged into the sea by the rivers. Do you not know that a calculation has been made of the quantity of water raised by the action of the Sun, at a given degree of heat, and in a given time, in order to be afterwards resolved into rain by the help of the winds?

You say, that you think the idea of those authors very badly founded, who have supposed that the snows and the rains are sufficient for the formation of rivers.—You may be assured, however, that the imagination has no share in this; it is a truth established by calculation. You may consult upon that subject Mariotte and the Philosophical Transactions.

In one word, Sir, if I may be permitted to answer the honour of your letter by a piece of advice,
read

read the good authors who have taken experiment and calculation for their sole guides, and consider all the rest as *Romances* unworthy of the attention of a man who wishes to inform himself.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R IX.

To the Same, upon OCCULT QUALITIES.

YES, Sir, I have said it, I say it again, and will repeat it, notwithstanding my certainty of being tiresome, that the doctrine of Occult Qualities is the wisest and truest that antiquity has produced. The formation of the elements, the emission of light, animals, vegetables, minerals, our birth, our death, waking, sleeping, sensation, thought,—every thing is Occult Quality.

Descartes thought himself much superior to Aristotle, when he repeated in French what that sage had said in Greek. *We ought to begin with doubting.* He ought not, therefore, after doubting, to have created a world of cubes, and to have made of those cubes a globulous, a ramous, and a subtile matter; to have composed stars of such ingredients, and contrived a mechanism in nature, contrary to every law of motion. This extravagant romance succeeded for some time, because romances were then in fashion. Cyrus and Clelia were much better works, because they led no one into error.—Teach me the history of the world if you know it, but beware of inventing it.

See, feel, measure, weigh, calculate, collect, separate, and be assured that you will never do any more.

Newton

Newton calculated the force of gravitation, but without discovering its cause. Why is that cause Occult? Because it is a first principle.

We are acquainted with the laws of motion; but the cause of motion being a first principle, will for ever remain a secret. You are alive, but how? You will never know any thing of the matter. You have sensations, ideas, but can you guess by what they are produced? Is not that the thing in the world the most Occult?

Secré

Names have been given to a certain number of faculties, which display themselves in us according as our organs acquire some degree of strength, when they are freed from the teguments in which we were inclosed during nine months, (without so much as knowing in what that strength consists.) If we recall any thing to mind, we say it is memory; if we range a few ideas in order, it is judgment; if we form a connected picture of some other scattered ideas, it is called imagination:—and the result or principle of these qualities is named *Soul*, a thing still a thousand times more Occult.

Therefore, if you please, since it is certainly true that there does not exist in you one separate being called *Sensibility*, another *Memory*, a third *Judgment*, a fourth *Imagination*, can you easily conceive that you have a fifth composed of the four others which do not exist?

What was understood by the antients, when they pronounced the Greek words *Psyché* or *Nous*? Did they mean a property of man, or a particular Being concealed in man? Was it not an *occult* expression of a very occult thing?

And what are all the systems of *Ontology* and *Psychology*, but idle dreams? We are entirely un-

acquainted

acquainted with ourselves in our mother's womb, yet there our ideas ought to be the purest, because there our attention is the least disturbed.—We know nothing of ourselves either at our birth, or as we grow up, or during our life, or at our death.

The first reasoner who departed from the ancient doctrine of Occult Qualities, corrupted the understanding of mankind.—He plunged us into a labyrinth, from which it is now impossible to extricate ourselves.

How much wiser had the first man been, who sensible of his ignorance, had said to that Being who is the Author of the universe, "Thou hast made me without my knowing it, and thou preservest me without my being able to find out the mode of my existence. I fulfilled one of the most abstruse laws of natural philosophy, when I suckled my mother's breast; and I fulfil one still more unknown to me when I eat and digest the aliments with which thou feedest me. I know still less how some ideas enter my head to quit it the next moment without ever re-appearing; and how others remain there during my whole life, notwithstanding my strongest efforts to drive them out. I am an effect of thy occult and supreme power, which the stars obey as well as myself. A particle of dust agitated by the wind, saith not I command the winds. *In te vivimus movemur & sumus. Thou art the sole being, and all the rest is modification.*"*

This is that philosophy of Occult Qualities, of which Father Malebranche had a glimpse in the

* Mr. de Voltaire's expression is, "*Tu es le seul être, & tout le reste est mode.*" T.

last century. Could he have stopped on the edge of the abyss, he had been the greatest or rather the sole Metaphysician; but he wanted to speak to the *word*; he leaped into the gulph and disappeared.

In his two first books he had knocked at the gates of truth; the author of the action of God upon his creatures turned all round, but he did it as a blind man turns a mill.—A little before that time, there lived a Philosopher who was their master, without their knowing it; Heaven forbid that I should name him.

Since then we have had only men of wit; we must however except Mr. Locke, who was more than a man of wit, &c.

LETTER XII.

To Mr. P. Advocate of the Parliament of Dijon,
on some LAWS or CUSTOMS.

[*Ferney, 28 Dec. 1771.*]

I THANK you, Sir, for making us acquainted with our barbarous customs. I have read what regards the slavery of Mortmain, with the more attention and interest, as I have been labouring for a twelve month past, in favour of those who are called Freemen and yet are slaves;—slaves even to Monks. St. Pacome and St. Hilarion were very far from thinking, that their successors would be masters of more slaves by Mortmain, than were possessed by Attila or Genferic. Our Monks say that they have succeeded to the rights of the conquerors, and that their vassals are the successors of the conquered. The cause

U

is

is actually before the council.—We shall certainly lose it ; such strength is in old customs, and such virtue in the saints.

We laugh at original sin ; but we are wrong. Every body has his original sin. That of these poor bondmen who amount to more than an hundred thousand through the kingdom, is, that their fathers, the Gaulish peasantry, did not cut the throats of that handful of barbarous Visigoths, Burgundians, or Franks, who came to rob and murder them. Had they defended themselves with the same vigour the Romans did against the Cimbri, we should have no suit now a-days about Mortmain.

They who enjoy this noble right, assure us that it is divine. I perfectly agree with them, for certainly it is not human. I acknowledge to you, Sir, that I renounce it with all my heart ; I wish neither for right of Mortmain nor Escheat in the little nook of land which I inhabit, and I find my account in it.—I am extremely pleased with the edict of Henry II. which has been adopted by the Parliament of Paris.—Why is it not registered by all the other Parliaments in the Kingdom ? Almost all our antient jurisprudence is ridiculous, barbarous, and contradictory. What is true on this side of my brook is false on the other. All our customs are fit only to be thrown into the fire. In England there is but one law and one measure.

You quote the *Spirit of Laws* ; alas ! it never has remedied, nor ever will remedy, any thing. Not because its author too often makes erroneous quotations, or is almost always aiming at shewing his wit : but because there is only a King who can compose a good book on our laws, by
changing

changing them entirely. Accept my thanks, Sir, &c.

L E T T E R XIII.

To the Baron de Faugeres, an Officer of the Navy, on the Subject of a MONUMENT which he proposed to erect at Montpellier, to the great Men of the Age of Louis XIV.

YOU propose, Sir, that around the statue of Louis XIV. which has been erected since his death at Montpellier, there should likewise be raised Monuments of all the great Men who adorned his reign. This project is so much the finer, as for some years there seems to have been a party formed to depreciate every thing that constituted the glory of those memorable times. They are weary of the master-pieces of the last age.—They use every effort to make Louis XIV. appear little, and above all reproach him with having desired to be great. The nation in general gives the preference to Henry IV. and excludes all the other kings. I do not examine whether this proceeds from justice or fickleness;—if our reason brought to perfection can now discern true merit better than formerly, I only remark, that in the time of Henry IV. it had no knowledge of merit; it did not even discern it.—‘*My people do not know me, but they will regret me;*’ said that excellent Prince to the Duke de Sully. In fact, Sir, let us speak without disguise; he was hated and but very little respected. Fanaticism, which persecuted him from his cradle, conspired an hundred times against his life, and at last deprived him of it in the midst of his great officers, by the hand

of an old mendicant Monk, who had lost his senses, and was transported with the madness of the *League*.—We now make him the *Amende honorable**; we give him the preference to all our kings, though we still preserved, and that for a long time, a great part of those prejudices which concurred to the assassination of the best of sovereigns.

But if Henry IV. was great, his age was not so in any respect. I shall not here mention the multitude of criminal and infamous actions with which superstition and discord polluted France. I confine myself to those arts, the glory of which you wish to eternize. They were either unknown or very unskilfully exercised. To begin with that of war. It had been carried on forty years, and in all that time there had not been a single man who left behind him the reputation of an able general; not one whom posterity has placed on a level with a Prince of Parma, or a Prince of Orange.—As to the Marine, Sir, you who have distinguished yourself in it, are sensible that it did not then exist.—The arts of peace which constitute the charms of society, embellish cities, enlighten the understanding, and soften the manners; all these were entirely strangers among us. They originated only in that age which saw the birth and the death of Louis XIV.

I find it difficult to conceive the inveteracy with which we now persecute the memory of the great Colbert, who contributed so much to the improvement of all those arts, and especially that

* In France, criminals who publicly ask pardon of God, their King, and their Country, are said to make the *Amende honorable*. T.

of the Marine, which is one of the principal objects of our great design. You know, Sir, that he gave birth to that navy which was so long formidable. Two years before his death, France had a fleet of an hundred and eighty men of war, and thirty galleys. Manufactures, commerce, trading companies in the East and West Indies,—all were his work.—Somebody may arise superior to him, and this will assuredly be great praise; but no man will be ever able to eclipse him.

It will be the same thing with respect to the sciences, such as eloquence, poetry, philosophy; and in those arts in which the hand is directed by genius, such as architecture, painting, sculpture, and mechanics. The men who embellished the age of Louis XIV. by all those talents, will never be forgotten, whatever may be the merit of their successors. They who appear first in a career, are always placed at the head of it by posterity. Newton, in his dispute with Leibnitz, observed that glory is due only to inventors; and he was in the right. We ought to consider as inventors, a Paschal, who, in fact, composed a new species of eloquence;—a Pellison who defended Fouquet in the same style in which Cicero defended King Dejotarus before Cæsar;—a Corneille, who among us was a creator of tragedy, even when he copied the Spanish Cid;—a Moliere, who really invented comedy, and brought it to perfection. And had not Descartes in his inventions forsaken his guide, Geometry;—had Malebranche known when to stop in his flight, what men would they not have been!

All the world allows that the great age I am speaking of was the age of genius. But after the men who are regarded as inventors, often
2 come,

come, I do not say disciples formed in the school of their masters, because this would be commendable, but apes who strive to spoil the work of those inimitable masters. Thus, after Newton has discovered the nature of light, comes a Castel, who wants to refine upon him, and proposes an ocular harpsichord.

A new world in miniature was no sooner discovered by the help of the microscope, than there started up a Needham, who fancied he had formed a republic of eels, which immediately brought forth other eels; and all this in a drop of broth, or in a drop of water that had smutty wheat boiled in it. Animals and vegetables were produced without seed, and to compleat the ridicule, this was called the sublime of Natural History.

As soon as true philosophers had calculated the action of the Sun and Moon, on the flux and reflux of the seas, romancers inferior to Cirano de Bergerac, wrote the history of the times, when those seas covered the Alps and Mount Caucasus, and when the universe was inhabited only by fish. They afterwards point out to us the great epocha, when the porpoises, our ancestors, became men, with the manner in which their forked tail was changed into thighs and legs. This is the great service that Teliamed has lately done to mankind.

Thus, Sir, in every art, and in every profession, the good masters are succeeded by quacks. And heaven grant that we may never have quacks of a more pernicious kind than these.

May your project be executed; may all the geniuses who adorned the age of Louis XIV. rise again in the square at Montpellier, and inspire succeeding ages with endless emulation, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R XIV.

To an Ecclesiastic, Author of an Epic Poem on the Conquest of the Land of Promise, in Twelve Cantos, printed at Paris by Delalain, Bookseller, Rue St. Jaques, 1766, with the Privilege of the King.

THE person, Sir, whom you commissioned to transmit to me your poem of the *Land of Promise*, not only has omitted to send me your beautiful work, but has not even mentioned it to me; he did not think me capable of reading so curious a performance. I am fully sensible of the value of what I have lost. Doubtless nothing can be more poetical than the Conquests of Joshua, and all that preceded and followed them. No Grecian fiction comes near them; every event is a prodigy; and the effect produced by these miracles will be the more admirable, as the author cannot be said to introduce the Deity after the manner of the ancient Greek poets, who brought down a divinity upon the scene, when they were at a loss how to unravel their plot. The finger of God is every where to be traced throughout the subject of your work, without the divine interposition being a necessary resource. Joshua might have forded the Jordan, which is not five-and-forty feet broad, and is fordable in an hundred places, but God made the river flow back to its source, in order to manifest his glory.

It was not necessary that Jericho should fall by the sound of rams horns, since Joshua had intelligence in the city by means of Rahab, the harlot, but God made the walls fall by seven processions, to shew that he is the master of all walls.—The

Amorites,

Amorities, were already crushed by a shower of stones which fell from Heaven; it was not necessary that God should stop the Sun and Moon at noon day, in order that Joshua might triumph over that handful of men who had just been stoned from on high. If God stopped the Sun and Moon, it was to demonstrate to the Jews, that the Sun and Moon depended upon him.

What appears to me still more favourable to poetry is that the subject is little, and the means, great. Joshua conquered indeed only three or four leagues of country, which was soon after lost; but all nature was thrown into convulsions for the little tribe of Ephraim. It is thus that Æneas, in Virgil, establishes himself in a village in Italy, by the help of the gods. The great advantage you have over Virgil is, that you sing the truth, and that he sung only fiction. Both your heroes were pious, which is another advantage.—It is true, that Joshua may be reproached with some cruelties; but they are sacred, and this is still a further advantage. We are told there were only thirty Kings condemned to be hanged in that little country of four leagues, for having dared to resist a stranger sent by the Lord. And you may prove, whenever you please, that for the sake of the good cause we cannot hang too many heretical princes.

Judge, Sir, how I regret the not having had it in my power, in my unpromised land, to read your epic poem on the promised land, of which I have conceived such great hopes.

I have the honour to be, with all the sentiments that are due to you, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

To Mr. Horace Walpole.

S I R,

Ferney, 15th July, 1778.

I HAVE not ventured to speak a word of English these forty years, and you speak our language extremely well. I have seen some of your letters, written as you think. Besides, my age and infirmities do not permit me to write with my own hand: you will therefore receive my thanks in my own tongue.

I have just read the Preface to your *History of Richard III.* I thought it too short:—when a man is so clearly in the right, and joins to his knowledge a philosophy so firm, and a style so masculine, I could wish that he spoke to me longer. Your father was a great Minister and a good Orator, but I doubt whether he could have written like you.—You cannot say, *quia pater major me est.*

I have thought as you do, Sir, that we ought to distrust all ancient histories. Fontenelle, the only man of the age of Louis XIV. who was at once a poet, a philosopher, and a man of erudition, declared that they were in a great measure fabulous. And it must be confessed that Rollin has compiled too many chimeras and contradictions.

After having perused the preface to your history, I read that to your romance. You there divert yourself a little at my expence;—the French understand raillery, but I am going to answer you seriously.

You have aimed at making your countrymen believe that I despise Shakespeare. I was the first that

introduced Shakespeare to the French ; forty years ago I translated some passages from him, as well as from Milton, Waller, Rochester, Dryden, and Pope. I can assure you that before my time no person in France had the least knowledge of English poetry—The name of Locke had hardly been heard of there. I have been persecuted these thirty years by a cloud of fanatics, for having said that Locke is the Hercules of Metaphysics, who has fixed the boundaries of the human mind.

My destiny likewise decreed that I should be the first who explained to my countrymen the discoveries of the great Newton, which some people among us still call systems. I have been your apostle and your martyr. In truth, the English ought not to complain of me.

I long ago said, that had Shakespeare appeared in the age of Addison, he would have joined to his genius that elegance and purity for which Addison is commendable. I have said *that his genius was his own, and his faults those of his age*. He is exactly similar in my opinion to the Lopez de Vega, and the Chaldeirona of the Spaniards.—A beautiful nature, but very wild, no regularity, no decency, no art ; a mixture of meanness and grandeur, of buffoonery with the terrible ; the chaos of tragedy, in which there are an hundred flashes of light. The Italians, who restored tragedy a century before the English and Spaniards, did not give into this fault. They were better imitators of the Greeks.—There is no buffoonery in the Oedipus and Electra of Sophocles. I strongly suspect that this gross practice took its rise from our court buffoons. We are all of us on this side the Alps a little rude and unpolished.
Each

Each Prince had his fool, who had a regular appointment. Ignorant Kings, educated by ignorant preceptors, could not be acquainted with the noble pleasures of the understanding: they so far degraded human nature, as to pay a man for entertaining them with nonsense. Hence came our *mere sotte* (foolish mother) and before Moliere's time there was hardly any of our comedies without a court fool in it. This custom is abominable.

I have said, it is true, Sir, as you relate of me, that there are serious comedies, such as the *Misanthrope*, which are masterly performances: that there are some extremely laughable, as *George Dandin*; that the risible, the serious, and the pathetic may with propriety be united in the same comedy. I have said that all the kinds are good except the dull kind.—Yes, Sir, but gross vulgarity is of no kind. *There are many apartments in my father's house*; but I never pretended that it was decent to lodge in the same chamber Charles V. and Don Japhet of Armenia; Augustus and a drunken sailor; M. Aurelius and a Merry Andrew. This seems to me to have been the opinion of Horace, in the most refined of all ages: consult his art of poetry. All the enlightened part of Europe is of the same opinion now a days; even the Spaniards begin now to get rid of their bad taste and the Inquisition at the same time: for an enlightened understanding proscribes equally the one and the other.

You are so sensible, Sir, how much a tragedy is disfigured by what is trivial and low, that you reproach Racine with making Antiochus, in *Bere-nice*, say,

De son appartement cette porte est prochaine,
Et cette autre conduit dans celui de la Reine.

This is the door of his apartment—
This other leads us to the Queen's—

These verses are certainly not very heroical, but be so good as to observe that they are in a narrative scene, which ought to be simple. This is not a beauty of poetry, but a beauty of exactness, which fixes the place of the scene, gives the audience at once all the necessary information, and prepares them for the appearance of all the characters of the piece in this closet, which communicates with all the other apartments; because without this it would by no means seem probable that Titus, Berenice, and Antiochus should converse together through the whole of the piece in the same chamber.

Que le lieu de la scène y soit fixé & marqué.

'*Let the place of the scene be fixed and marked out,*' says that oracle of good taste, the judicious Despreux, in his Art of Poetry, which is at least equal to that of Horace.—Our excellent Racine hardly ever failed in this rule, and it is a circumstance worthy of admiration, that he makes *Athalie* appear in the temple of the Jews, and in the same place where the High Priest has been seen, without transgressing in any degree the rules of probability.

You will still more easily, Sir, excuse the illustrious Racine, when you recollect that the play of *Berenice* was in some measure the history of Louis XIV. and of your English Princess the sister of Charles II. They both lodged on the

same floor at St. Germain, and their apartments were separated by a saloon.

I will remark, by the bye, that Racine represented on the stage the amours of Louis XIV. with his sister-in-law, and that monarch was highly pleased with him for it. A stupid tyrant perhaps would have punished him. I will likewise remark, that this Berenice, so tender, so delicate, so disinterested, to whom Racine pretends that Titus was indebted for all his virtues, and who was upon the point of being Empress, was only an insolent and debauched Jewess, that publicly lay with her own brother Agrippa the Second. Juvenal calls her an *Incestuous Barbarian*. I observe in the third place, that she was forty-four years old, when Titus dismissed her. My fourth remark is, that this Jewish mistress of Titus is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. She was then young, when according to the writer of the Acts, she came to visit Festus, Governor of Judæa, and when Paul being accused of having polluted the temple, defended himself, by saying that he was still a good Pharisee: but let us leave the Pharisaicalness of Paul, and the gallantry of Berenice. Let us return to the rules of the stage, which are more interesting to men of letters.

The English writers are so fond of liberty, as to observe neither *unity of place*, *unity of time*, nor *unity of action*. In truth, your pieces are not the better for this: probability ought to be reckoned for something.—The art becomes more difficult by preserving it, and difficulties that are overcome, give pleasure and reputation in every kind of composition. Permit me, Sir, though you are an Englishman, in some respects to defend my
own

own nation.—I so often tell them truths of this kind, that it is very just I should commend them, when I think they are in the right. Yes, Sir, I have believed, I do believe, and I shall continue to believe, that in regard to Tragedies and Comedies, Paris is infinitely superior to Athens. Moliere, and even Regnard, seem to me to excel Aristophanes, as much as Demosthenes excels our pleaders. I will tell you boldly, that all the Greek Tragedies appear to me, the works of school boys in comparison of the *sublime scenes* of Corneille, and the *perfect tragedies* of Racine. Thus thought Boileau himself, notwithstanding the warmth of his admiration for the ancients. He made no difficulty of writing under Racine's portrait, that that great man had surpassed Euripides, and equalled Corneille.

Yes, I believe it to be indisputable, that there are many more men of taste in Paris, than there were in Athens. At Paris we have more than thirty thousand people, who delight in the fine arts, and Athens had not ten thousand. In Athens the common people entered the theatre, and with us they do not, except upon solemn or ridiculous occasions, when they are presented with a spectacle gratis. Our continual intercourse with the fair sex, has given our sentiments much more delicacy, our morals much more decency, and our taste much more refinement. Leave us our theatre; let the Italians enjoy their *Favole boscarecie* you are rich enough without these.

Some very bad pieces, it is true, which are barbarously written, and whose plots are ridiculous, have for a time prodigious success at Paris, when supported by cabal, the spirit of party, the fashion, or the temporary protection of some persons

persons of credit. It is the intoxication of a moment, but in a very few years the illusion is dissipated. Don Japhet of Armenia, and Turcaret are abandoned to the populace, and the Siege of Calais is no longer esteemed except at Calais.

I must say one word more to you on the rhyme with which you reproach us.—Almost all Dryden's pieces are in rhyme. It is one difficulty more;—those verses of his, which are in the memory and the mouths of every body, are in rhyme: and I still maintain, that after *Cinna*, *Atbalia*, *Phædra*, *Iphigenia*, have been written in rhyme, whoever would shake off that yoke in France, would be looked upon as a feeble artist who had no strength to support it.

In quality of an old man, I will tell you an anecdote. I one day asked Pope why Milton had not put his poem into rhyme, at the time when the other poets did it, in imitation of the Italians; his reply was, *because he could not?*

I have now, Sir, said all that I had on my heart. I acknowledge that I committed a great blunder in not recollecting that the Earl of Leicester, went originally by the name of Dudley, but if you was to take a fancy of entering into the House of Peers, I should always remember the name of Walpole with the most respectful esteem.

Before sending this letter, I have had time, Sir, to read your Richard III. You would make an excellent Attorney-General. You weigh all the probabilities, but you seem to have a secret predilection for that *Crook-back*. You maintain him to have been a handsome fellow, and even a man of honour. The Benedictine Calmet has written a dissertation, to prove that Jesus Christ had a
fine

fine face. I am willing to believe with you, that Richard III. was neither so ugly nor so wicked as he is represented: but I should not have been fond of having any thing to do with him. Your *white rose* and your *red rose* had dreadful thorns for the nation.

Those gracious Kings are all a pack of rogues.

In truth, when we peruse the histories of the houses of York and Lancaster, we would be tempted to believe we were reading the history of highwaymen.—As for your Henry VII. he was only a cut-purse, &c.

I am with respect.

L E T T E R XVI.

To a Minister of State.

[*July, 1767.*]

YOU know, my Lord, that at coming out of the grand council, which was assembled to consider the testament of the King of Spain, Louis XIV. met three of his daughters, who were at play, and said to them, “Well, how would you act if you were in my place?” These young Princesses gave such opinions as occurred to them; upon which the King replied,—in whatever manner I act, I shall be sure of being censured.

You have condescended to act the same part with an ignorant old man, that Louis XIV. did with his children. This piece of pleasantry amuses you. The curate wishes sometimes that the clown should argue with him.

I im-

I immediately begin to argue then, by saying that all men have been, are at present, and will continue to be guided by circumstances. I exceedingly respect Cardinal de Richelieu, but he did not engage with Gustavus Adolphus, until Gustavus had landed in Pomerania without consulting him; yet he took the advantage of the event. Cardinal Mazarine profiting by the death of the Duke of Weimar, obtained Alsace for France, and the Duchy of Rhetel for himself. Let people say what they will, Louis XIV. did not expect, when he concluded the peace of Ryswick, that in three years his grandson would succeed to the throne of Charles V. He still less expected, that the first war in which his grandson should engage would be against his uncle. Nothing of what you have seen happen, had been foreseen. You know that chance brought about the peace with England, which that fine fellow Lord Bolingbroke signed, when in the arms of Mademoiselle P You, my Lord, like all other great men, profit by the situation in which you find things at the time.

The great point, they say, is to have money. Henry IV. prepared to make himself the Arbitrator of Europe, by having gold scales made with the assistance of the Duke de Sully. The English succeed only by means of their guineas, and the ten-fold credit which they procure. The King of Prussia made all Germany tremble for some time, because his father had left more bags of money than bottles, in his cellars at Berlin. We are no longer in the days of Fabricius: it is the richest that carries the day, as it is he among us, who is most rich, that purchases the employment of a Master of the Court of Requests, and

Y

who

who afterwards may come to govern the nation. This is not very noble, but nevertheless it is the truth.

I see that upon all the thrones in the world, they live from hand to mouth like Fontaine's Cöbler. What! is there no system? No, the systems of Pythagoras, Democritus, Plato, Descartes and Leibnitz have all fallen to the ground. Perhaps in your noble profession, as in natural philosophy, it is best to be satisfied with making experiments.

L E T T E R XVII.

To Mr. Tiriot.

Ferneſy, 15 Sept. 1768.

IN good truth, my friend, all the world are quacks; schools, academies, the gravest societies, are like Arnaud, the apothecary, whose little purses cure all kinds of apoplexies as soon as they are tied about the neck; and Mr. le Lievre, who still sells his *Baume de Vie*, notwithstanding the numbers of people who die daily.

The Jesuits had a lawsuit some years ago with the druggists at Paris, about I know not what sort of an Elixir which they sold at a very high price, after having sold abundant grace which was not sufficient; while the Jansenists sold effectual grace, which had no efficacy. This world is a great fair, where every Merry Andrew endeavours to collect the croud about himself: every man preys upon his neighbour. There is a certain sage in our little country here, who has discovered that the souls of fleas and gnats are immortal,

mortal, and that all animals are created only to rise again. There are some people however, who have not such high expectations. I even know those who can scarce be made to believe that the water polypus is an animal. They see nothing in the small weeds that float in stinking ponds, but plants that grow again after having been cut, like any other plants. They do not see that these weeds devour little insects; but they see the little insects enter into the substance of the weeds and devour them.

These same unbelievers will not be persuaded that coral is composed of heaps of little sea vermin. The late Mr. de la Faye said, that he had no sort of desire to be perfectly acquainted with the history of such sort of folks, and that it was not worth while to give one's self any trouble about people with whom we never can live.

— But we have some other geniuses still more sublime than those:—they will create a world for you with as much ease as the Abbé de la Teignart writes a sonnet, and employ for that purpose instruments which never have been seen. Others come afterwards, and people this world by *attraction*. A certain dreamer in my neighbourhood has seriously asserted in print, that this world will last as long as new systems can be formed, but that when the stock of systems is exhausted, the world will come to an end. If this be the case, we have still a considerable time to look forwards.

You had great reason for astonishment, when you found in *The Man of Forty Crowns*, that the system of eggs was ascribed to the great Calculator Harvey. It is true that he believed it, and was so perfectly persuaded of it, that he took these words for his motto, *Every thing originates*

from an egg. In the mean time, while he was assuring us that eggs were the universal principle of nature, he saw nothing in the formation of animals, but the employment of a weaver who warps his thread.

Others after him, saw an infinite number of minute worms frisking about in the seminal fluid. Some time after this, they were no longer to be seen, and went entirely out of fashion. All the systems which have been erected about the manner of our coming into the world have been destroyed one after another. The way of making love is the only one that has never been changed.

You ask me very properly, now we are on the subject of all these romances, whether in Lapon's collection, which is just published at Lyons, they have printed those surprising letters, wherein it was proposed to perforate a hole to the center of the earth;—to build a Latin town there;—to dissect the brains of Patagonians, on purpose to be informed of the nature of the soul;—and to cloath the human body with pitch to preserve health:—you will find that these fine things are exceedingly softened, and very much disguised in this new edition. So that in the end, it will be found that I have corrected the work. *Ridiculum acri fortius ac melius magnas plerumque jecat res.*

What is printed in my name gives me more pain; but what would you have me to do? I cannot help it. Can Arnaud, the Apothecary, prevent his little bags from being counterfeited? Adieu, *Qui bene latuit bene vixit.*

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

To the Earl of Chesterfield.

Ferney, 27 September, 1771.

* * * * *

OF the five senses which fall to our lot, my Lord Huntingdon tells me you have lost only one, and that you have a good stomach, which is well worth a pair of ears.

Perhaps I am the properest person for deciding whether deafness, blindness, or want of digestion is the greatest calamity. From a knowledge of the case, I can judge of all the three, but it is a long time since I have presumed to decide upon trifles, and therefore have the stronger reasons for not attempting to decide on matters which are so important. I content myself with believing, that if you have plenty of sunshine in the handsome house which you have built, there will be tolerable monuments. This is all that can be hoped for at our time of life. Cicero wrote a very fine treatise upon old age, but he did not prove by facts what he had advanced in his writings, for the last years of his life were very unfortunate. You have lived much longer and happier than he did. You have had to do neither with perpetual dictators nor triumvirs. Your lot has been, and still is one of the most desirable in this great lottery, where the good prizes are so few, and where the great prize of continual happiness has never yet been gained by any one.

Your philosophy has never been distracted by chimeras, which have now and then perplexed
some

some brains that were otherwise tolerably good. You have never been in any sense a Quack yourself, nor a dupe to Quacks; which I esteem as no common degree of merit, and as contributing much to the shadow of happiness we can taste of in this short life, &c. &c.

L E T T E R XIX.

Ferney, 4th May, 1772.

IT is right, Sir, that every one should make his *testament*, but you very much doubt, whether that which has been imputed to me, is really my work. The Old and New Testament have occasioned foolish things enough to be said, without my adding any thing to the number. My pretended last Will is the production of an Advocate at Paris, whose name is Marchand, who sometimes makes people laugh at his drolleries. I hope that my real testament will be more decent, and wiser than this.

The misfortune is, that after having been slaves all our lives, we must likewise continue to be so after our deaths. No man can be buried as he would wish. They who would be glad to be deposited in the urns upon the chimney-pieces of their friends, are obliged to go and rot in a church-yard, or some such place. They who would wish to die in the communion of Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus and Cicero, are obliged to die in that of Martin Luther, if they die at Upsal; or to go to the next world besmeared with the oil of a Greek Patriarch, if a fever happens to lay hold of them in the Morea.

I confess to you, that of late years, they die much more commodiously in this little spot of country where I live, than they used to do formerly. The freedom of thinking has insensibly established itself here as in England. There are people who accuse me of this change. I could wish to have deserved this reproach from Constantinople to Dalicaria. It is horrid and ridiculous to trouble both the dead and the living. Every one, in my opinion, ought to dispose of his body and his soul after his own fancy: and the great point ought to be, that no one should molest either the soul or the body of his neighbour. Our consolation after death is, that we shall know nothing of the manner in which we are treated. We have been baptized without our knowing any thing of the matter, and it will be the same when we are buried. It would have been better perhaps never to have received this life, of which we are so often complaining, although we are so much attached to it. But none of all these things depends upon us. We are fixed, as Horace says, with the strong nails of necessity.

L E T T E R XX.

To Prince Gallitzin, Ambassador at the Hague.

Ferney, 19th June, 1773.

YOUR Excellency does a singular service to reason and good sense, by having the works of the late Mr. H—— reprinted. That book will find opponents, and even among the philosophers. No body will allow that all minds are equally capable of acquiring science, and differ only by education.

education. Nothing is more false, and nothing more clearly proved to be so, by constant experience. Sensible minds will always be sorry for what he has said about friendship, and he himself would have disapproved of what he has said, or at least he would have greatly softened it, if a systematic zeal had not carried him beyond all bounds.

It were to be wished, perhaps, that there had been more of method in this work and fewer of those little histories, which are for the most part false. But I am of opinion that all that he has said on superstition, on the abominations of intolerance, on liberty, on tyranny, and on human misery, will be well received by every one who is not a fool or a fanatic. Some philosopher might have corrected his first book; but to persecute him as was done, was both absurd and cruel, and worthy of the fourteenth century. Every thing that the fanatics have anathematized in this valuable man, may be found after all in the Maxims of the Duke de Rochefoucault, and even in the first chapters of Locke. We may write against a philosopher in searching, like him, after truth, though we pursue different routes; but by persecuting we disgrace and even render ourselves execrable. The Melituses and the Antituses almost went so far as to present a cup of hemlock to your friend.

I am likewise to thank your Excellency for the history of the war of the sublime Catherine against the sublime Porte, of the unsublime Mustapha. You know that I interest myself almost as much in that war, as in the universal toleration which condemns all wars. It is sometimes necessary to fight against ones neighbours, but we ought not to burn
our

our countryman alive for the sake of opinions. It is said that the Pope is of as tolerating a spirit as a Pope can be; I wish it may be so for the sake of the human race. I wish the same to the Mufti, to the Sherrif of Mecca, to the grand Lama, and to the Dairi.

I am the possessor of a spot of dirt as large as an ant hillock upon this wretched globe; I have Papists, Calvinists, Pietists, some few Socinians, and even a Jesuit, living with me; all these have lived together hitherto in the most perfect harmony. It is the same throughout the whole of your vast empire under the auspices of Catherine. They have enjoyed this happiness a long time in England, Holland, Brandenburg, Prussia, and in several towns in Germany: why then should they not enjoy it over the whole earth? Why is not the following maxim a little softened? *May he who is not of our opinion be like an exciseman, and as a Pagan**. Why should we throw the guest into a dungeon who hath not put on his best suit to come and sup with us? Why in these times did they make a father of a family and his wife die of an apoplexy, who having given almost all they had to the Jacobins, kept a few florins for a dinner? Why—? Why—? Why—? If I am asked why I am so attached to you, I will answer, it is because you are just and benevolent, and of a tolerating spirit.

What say you of the barbarous Energumen, who considered me as the enemy of your friend, and addressed me in a Philippic?

I beg your Excellency to accept my most grateful and respectful acknowledgments, &c.

* The Author's expression in the original is, "*Que celui qui n'est pas de notre avis, soit comme un commis des fermés & comme un payen.*"

L E T T E R XXI.

To Sir William Hamilton, Ambassador at Naples.

S I R,

Ferney, 17 July, 1773.

IT is to you the public are indebted for their knowing Vesuvius and Ætna, much better than they were known in the time of the Cyclops, or afterwards in that of Pliny. The mountains which you have seen from my windows at Ferney, are in a quite different taste. Your Vesuvius and your Ætna are extremely capricious;—they may be compared to those little men, who having too much vivacity, often put themselves into a passion without reason; but our hoary mountains, the *Glacieres*, that are ten times higher, and forty times their extent, have always the same aspect, and are in eternal repose. Lakes that are always frozen, and that are six miles in length, are fixed in the middle regions of the air, between white rocks above the clouds and the thunder, without seeming to have undergone any sensible change in a thousand ages.

It is no great distance from the furnace where you are, to the icy mountains of Switzerland, yet what an enormous difference between the countries, the inhabitants, and the governments; between Calvin and St. Januarius!

I was sorry to find that you could not get your thermometer repaired in Sicily. What would Archimedes say if he was to return to Syracuse! But what would the Trajans and the Antonines say if they were to return to Rome?

I am not at all surprized that the eruptions of Volcanos should produce small mountains. Those

which

which the ants raise in our gardens are much more astonishing. These little mountains formed in eight days by insects, are two or three hundred times the height of the architects. But for our venerable mountains, the only ones that are worthy of that name, from whence flow the Rhine, the Danube, the Rhone, and the Po; these enormous masses appear to have more consistence than Monte-Nuovo, or the pretended new-formed island of Santorin. The immense chain of high mountains, which in every sense may be said to crown the earth, have always appeared to me to be as ancient as the world;—they are the bones of that great animal;—he would perish of thirst if there were no rivers to water him, and there could be no rivers without these mountains, which are perpetual reservoirs.

We shall be well laughed at by posterity, when they know that we had quacks who would have made us believe that the Alps, Mount Taurus, the Pyrenees and the Cordilleras were formed by the currents of the sea.

All Paris was lately in alarm; being persuaded that a comet was coming to destroy the world on the 20th or 21st of May. In full expectation of this event, it was observed that all the ladies of the court, and all the market women went to confess, and this, you know, is an infallible secret for changing the course of comets. People who were not astronomers, prophesied formerly that the world would come to an end in their generation. Is it from pity or anger that this catastrophe is delayed? *To be, or not to be, that is the question, &c.*

L E T T E R XXII.

To Mr. Du M****, Member of several Academies,
upon ANCIENT ANECDOTES.

SINCE you could not obtain, my good friend, the Professorship of Arabic, apply for the Professorship of *ancient discoveries*. There are a number of them established, at least in that taste, if not under that appellation. It will be very entertaining to shew us, if it be true, that all which we think we have invented, has been borrowed from the ancients; as Reaumur has invented the art of hatching chickens without hens, five or six thousand years after the practice had begun in Egypt. There are people who have seen the whole of the Copernican system among the ancient Chaldeans: but what will be still more amusing, will be to shew that all our modern tales have been pillaged from the highest Oriental antiquity.

The story of the Ephesian Matron, for example, was given in verse by Fontaine, in France; and before his time, in Italy: it is to be met with in Petronius, and Petronius took it from the Greeks. But from whence had the Greeks taken it? From the Arabian tales, From whom did the Arabians get it? From the Chinese. You will see it in the Chinese tales, translated by Father Dentrecoles, and collected by Father Du Halde; and what is well worthy of your attention is, that the story is much more moral in the Chinese original than in our translations of it.

I introduced in one of my useless works, the fable on which Moliere founded his *Amphitruon*, which was an imitation of Plautus, who had copied it from the Greeks; but the original is Indian.

Indian. Here it is pretty nearly as it has been translated by Colonel Dow, who is a perfect master of the sacred language, which has been spoken twelve or fifteen thousand years upon the banks of the Ganges, near the town of Benares, about twenty leagues from Calcutta, which is the chief factory of the English East-India Company.

This learned Colonel, in the second volume of his History, page 273, tells us there was an Hindou of uncommon strength who had a beautiful wife, of whom he became jealous; and having beat her, run off and left her. A roguish Deity, who was not a Brama or a Vishnou, or a Sib, but a Deity of an inferior rank, yet at the same time very powerful, transformed himself into the figure of a man, exactly resembling the fugitive husband, and under that figure approached the forsaken wife. The doctrine of the metempsychosis gave the trick an air of probability. The amorous Deity begged pardon of the supposed wife for his having treated her so ill; and having obtained her forgiveness, he lay with her, got her with child, and continued master of the house. The husband, who had always loved his wife, at length repented, and returning to throw himself at her feet, finds another *self* settled in his house, by whom he is treated as an impostor and forcerer. This gave rise to a law-suit, like the affair of *Martin Guerre*, which happened with us. The case was pleaded before the judges of Benares. The chief judge was a Brachman, who immediately conjecturing that one of the two must be a dupe, and the other a Deity, hit upon the following method of discovering the true husband. Your spouse, Madam, said he to the lady, is one of the most robust men in India. Lie with each
of

of them, one after the other, in the presence of the Court. He of the two who affords the most numerous proofs of his prowess must doubtless be your real spouse. The husband gave twelve of these proofs; the impostor gave fifty. All the Bramin judges were going to decide in favour of this last, and to confirm him in the possession of the lady, when the Chief Justice observed, that the one was a hero, but had not surpassed human powers, while the other must be a God who sported with their ignorance. The Deity confessed the whole affair, and returned to Heaven laughing.

You will acknowledge that the Hindou Amphitryon is more comic and more ingenious than the Grecian Amphitryon, though it could not be so decently brought upon the stage.

You will perhaps surprise your hearers still more, when you relate the origin of the famous quarrel between Aaron, with Dathan, Korah, and Abiram, written by a Jew, who probably was the Loustick of his tribe. He is, perhaps, the only Jew who understood raillery. His book is not of the same antiquity with the first Brachmans; but certainly is ancient, and perhaps more ancient than Homer. The Italian Jews had it printed at Venice, in the fifteenth century; and the famous Gaumin, Counsellor of State, enriched it with notes in Latin. Fabricius has inserted them in his Latin translation of the life and death of Moses, another antient and more than Rabbinical work, which is pretended to have been written in the time of Esdras. I shall copy the passage as it occurs in the second book, page 165, number 297, of the Hamburgh edition.

“ It

" It was a poor widow who was the cause of
 " the quarrel. This woman had nothing but a
 " single ewe for her whole stock. She shorn her
 " ewe, and Aaron came and said unto her, it is
 " written, that the first fruits are the Lord's; and
 " he took away the wool. The widow, in tears,
 " went and complained to Korah, who remon-
 " strated to the priest Aaron, but his remon-
 " strances were of no effect. Korah gave four
 " pieces of silver to the poor woman, and with-
 " drew in anger. In a little time after, the ewe
 " yeaned her first lamb: Aaron returned and said,
 " My good woman, it is written that the firstling
 " of every beast is the Lord's. He carried off
 " the lamb and eat it. Korah remonstrated again,
 " but to as little purpose as before.

" The widow in despair killed her ewe, and
 " immediately Aaron was with her, and took the
 " jaw, the shoulder, and the loin. Korah was
 " angry with him, but Aaron said that it was so
 " written, and that he would eat the shoulder and
 " the loin. The widow being provoked to passion
 " swore and said, the Devil take my ewe. Aaron,
 " who heard this, returned and said, it is written
 " that whatever is cursed is the Lord's, and he
 " eat the rest of the poor ewe for his supper.
 " Such is the cause of the quarrel between Aaron,
 " on the one part, and Korah, Dathan, and
 " Abiram, on the other."

This piece of ill-natured wit has been copied
 by more than one nation. There is not a single
 good fable in Fontaine that does not come from
 the middle of Asia: you will even find some of
 them among the Tartars. I recollect to have read
 formerly in Plancarpin's, Rubruqui's, and Mark
 Paolo's Collection of Voyages, that a Tartar
 Chief,

Chief, when at the point of death, repeated to his children the fable of the old man who gave his sons the bundle of rods to break*.

Have we a more philosophical tale in the west, than that which Olearius relates of Alexander? I mentioned it in one of the pamphlets which I did not send to you, because it was not worth carriage. The scene is in the most distant parts of Bactriana, at a time when all the Asiatic Princes were in search of the waters of immortality, as our knights errant in later times have sought after the waters of youth. Alexander met an angel in the cavern where the Magi assured him, that the waters of immortality were to be had. The angel gave him a flint. Bring me another of the same form and weight, said he to him, and I will then suffer thee to drink of the water thou art in search of. Alexander himself searched, and caused search to be made every where to no purpose. After a deal of fruitless labour, he thought proper to choose a flint nearly resembling the one he had received, and added a little earth to give it the weight and form. The angel Gabriel perceiving the trick, said to him, *Friend, remember thou art only earth. Despair of drinking the waters of immortality; and do not attempt to impose upon Gabriel†.*

This apologue teaches us that there are not two things in nature to be found perfectly alike; and that the ideas of Leibnitz upon *the indiscernable*, were known long before his time in the heart of Tartary‡.

* Voyages of Plancarpin, Lubruquis, Mark Paul, and Haiton, chap. xvii. of Haiton, page 31.

† Olearius, page 169.

‡ Some use has been made of this history in a little book, entitled Chinese, Indian, and Tartar Letters.

Most part of the stories which have been repeated over and over again in our jest books, and all the witty repartees which have been ascribed to Charles V. Henry IV. and an hundred modern princes, may be found in Atheneus, and other old writers. It is in this sense only that we can say, *nihil sub sole novum*, &c.

LETTER XXIII.

To Mr. De Chaban, upon PINDAR and HORACE.

Ferney, March 9, 1772.

YOU have made me a very handsome present, my dear friend. By making Pindar known, you will do a great service to literature. Your translation is noble and elegant; your notes are very instructive. I will own to you that I am vexed to see Pindar so frequently cutting his words in two, to put one half at the end of one verse, and the other half at the beginning of the next.

I know you will tell me that it was done for the sake of the music; but I am not the less astonished to see in the first strophe,

Χρυσέα φορμιξ Ἀπολλο—
νός. Καὶ ἰοπλοκάμων.

Would you put in an opera,

Golden lyre of Apollo,
lo, and his violet hair?

What do you say of

A a

Ἀμφι

Ἀμφὶ τὴ Λα-

τοῖα

The son of La-
tona?

I should think that the Greeks might have made music without such strange medley. The Odes of Anacreon were sung, yet Anacreon never thought of cutting his words in two.

It is pretended that the Rhapsodists sung Homer's verses; but there is not a single verse in Homer cut like those in Pindar.

What seems very strange to me is to see in Horace,

Jove non probante ux-
orius amnis.

Jove disapproving the ux-
orious river.

He frequently takes this liberty; but there is no finding fault with the method which Horace has adopted. All that we can say is, that the French would laugh at us if we were to take the same liberties which Pindar and Horace have taken. We must except Chapelle however, whom we often find writing in this manner.

I much doubt, however, if all the Odes of Horace were sung. Do you imagine that the Roman ladies, and men of fashion, had a great deal of pleasure in singing at table this song, *Perficos odi*? of which Dacier has given the following translation:

“ I am not for the Persian magnificence. I
“ cannot even endure the crowns which are
“ bound with little bands of the Linden tree.
“ Cease

“ Cease therefore to enquire where thou may’st
 “ procure late blowing roses. I only ask for
 “ crowns of simple myrtle, without their be-
 “ ing made up in any other form. The myrtle
 “ suits a lacquey like thee, and is not improper
 “ for me, while I drink under the shade of an
 “ arbour.”

I likewise doubt, whether the good company in Rome joined in singing in chorus the horrid practices with which Horace reproaches the forcerer Canidia, and some other old women.

A number of the learned alledge, that three-fourths of the Odes of Horace were not made to be sung : but an ode is a song ; and what is a song that cannot be sung ? We are told that it is the universal practice all over Europe to make stanzas in rhyme which are never sung. But the lovers of music say, that it is the remains of barbarism.

The Abbé Terrasson asked what tune Moses sung the famous song at coming out of the Red Sea : *Let us sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously.*

I must now quarrel a little with you about your preliminary discourse, which appears to me to be excellent. You call Cowley the English Pindar. You do him a great deal of honour. He was a poet without harmony, who aimed at wit upon every occasion. Dryden, the author of that beautiful Ode, entitled, *Alexander’s Feast, or Alexander and Timotheus*, is the true Pindar. That Ode, set to music, by Purcel, (if I am not mistaken) passes in England, for a most sublime and most varied master-piece of poetry ; and I own to you, that as I understand English better than I do the Greek, I love this ode an hundred times better than any of Pindar’s. If it is not blasphemy against Hieron, the first violin to the King of

Sicily, I could wish only to know whether his Odes were sung in parts. It is probable that the Greeks understood this harmony, which we so impudently deny. Plato expressly says so, and in explicit terms.

Pardon me for acting the man of learning with you.

L E T T E R XXIV.

To a Celebrated Actress.

IT is very true, Miss, that the charming Mrs. Oldfield, the best actress on the English stage, has had a monument erected for her in Westminster Abbey, along with the kings and heroes of that country; and even with the great Newton. It is likewise true, that Mademoiselle le Couvreur, the first actress in France in her days, was carried in a hackney-coach to the corner of Burgundy-street, which was not at that time paved, and was buried by a porter, and had no mausoleum erected for her. There are examples of every thing in this world. The English have instituted an annual festival in honour of their famous comedian and poet Shakespeare. We have not the festival of Moliere with us. Louis XIV. when at the summit of all his greatness, danced with the opera dancers before all Paris at his return from the famous campaign of 1672. If the Archbishop of Paris had made the same attempt, he would not have been so well received, though he had danced the best minuet in Europe.

Italy, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, thanks to the taste of Pope Leo X. and the
genius

genius of the prelates Babiena, la Casa, and Trifino, saw Tragedy and Comedy revived. Cardinal Richelieu had the hall of the royal palace built for the representation of his own pieces, and those of his five young poets. Two bishops, by his orders, did the honours on the occasion, and presented the ladies with refreshments between the acts.

We are indebted for the opera, to Cardinal Mazarine: but see how all things change. The Cardinals Dubois and Fleury, who were both prime ministers, did not even favour us with a farce at the fair. We are become more regular, our manners are undoubtedly more severe. The Jansenists were suspected of having armed the hands of the church against the theatres, that they might have the pleasure of falling upon the Jesuits, who had tragedies and comedies performed by their students, and who considered these exercises as the first requisites in a good education. It is even alledged that the Jesuits were so intimidated, that they laid aside these entertainments some time before the society was abolished in France.

You have without doubt, Miss, been told by the learned who come to visit you, that the contrary happened among the Greeks and Romans, our masters. The money destined for the support of the theatre of Athens was held sacred. It was not even allowed to be touched on the most pressing necessities, and in the greatest dangers of war.

They did even more than this in ancient Rome. The city having been laid waste by the plague towards the three hundred and nineteenth year from the time of its foundation; it was necessary

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to appease the gods by the most sacred ceremonies. But what did the senate do? They gave orders for a comedy to be played, and the plague ceased. A good physician will not be surpris'd at this; he knows that reasonable pleasures are good for health.

Unfortunately we resemble neither the Greeks nor the ancient Romans. It is true that there are many agreeable Frenchmen in France; but there are others, who would not look upon a comedy as a specific if they were attacked by the plague. For my part I could pass my life in hearing you, or may the plague choak me. I own that the contradictions which divide the minds of mankind on the subject of your profession, are without number; but you know that without a difference in opinions, conversation could not be kept up. There is no difference in opinion, however, among those who live with you; they all concur in the sentiments of esteem and friendship which they owe you.

L E T T E R XXV.

Answer to the Abbé Bertinelli, of Verona.

[This letter is of an old date.]

IF I was younger, and if I could have constrained myself, I should certainly have seen Rome, Venice, and your Verona: but Swiss and English liberty, which has always been my delight, does not permit me to venture into your country, to see the brothers of the inquisition, unless I could be more powerful than they. And as there is no appearance that I shall ever be a
general

general of an army, or an ambassador, you will think I do right not to go into a country where the books which a poor traveller carries in his cloak-bag are seized at the gates of the towns. I am by no means desirous of asking leave of a Dominican to speak, think, or read; and I ingenuously tell you, that this Italian slavery makes me shudder. I believe St. Peter's at Rome to be very fine; but I would rather have one good English book, written with freedom, than a thousand pillars of marble. I know not what kind of liberty you speak to me of near *Monte Baldo*; but I very much love that which Horace speaks of *fari quæ sentiat*. It is that which I have attained, after searching my whole life. The happiness which I have procured for myself is doubled by a commerce with you. I shall receive with the most grateful acknowledgments the information which you are so kind as to promise me upon the subject of the ancient Italian literature.

I think you have shewn a great degree of courage by venturing to call Danté a fool, and his work a monster: there are however even in that monster, fifty verses superior to the age in which he lived, and which I love better than all the little worms called *Sonetti*, which spring up and die by thousands a day in Italy, from Milan to Otranto.

Algarotti then, like *Lepidus*, has abandoned the triumvirate: I believe that at the bottom he thinks as you do of *Danté*. It is pleasant enough that even upon these trifles, a man who thinks, does not dare to speake his sentiments but in the ear of his friend. This world is a wretched masquerade. I can perfectly conceive how they who want to become popes or cardinals can dissemble their

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 their opinions, but I do not see any reason for their dissembling in other matters. What makes me love England is, there are no hypocrites there of any kind. I brought England home with me; at the same time however, I love the Italians infinitely, but more particularly you, Sir, whose genius and character are suited to please all nations, and who deserve to be as free as I am.

As for the dirty fellow *Marrini*, who has just printed Danté at Paris in a collection of Italian poems, he is a merchant who has lately set up a shop, and sells his commodity. He speaks ill both of Bayle and me; and reproaches us with preferring Virgil to Danté, which he considers as a crime. This poor wretch may well talk; Danté may get admittance into the libraries of the curious, but he will never be read. I have had volumes of Ariosto stolen from me, but never one of Danté.

I pray you give Signor Marrini to the devil and all his hell, with the panther, lions, and she-wolf which Danté met in his way. Beg pardon of Virgil, for his being placed in such bad company, by a poet of his own country. They who have the least spark of good sense, cannot but blush at this strange assemblage in hell of Danté, Virgil, St. Peter, and the Madona Beatrice. There are people to be found even in this eighteenth century, who admire such uncouth and extravagant conceits; and who have the stupidity to set them up in opposition to the most masterly works of genius, wisdom and eloquence that we have in our language. *O tempora! O judicium!*

L E T T E R XXVI.

Answer to METAPHYSICAL QUESTIONS.

THE recluse to whom you have written, Sir, frequently receives letters from *literati*, or their admirers, whom he has not the honour to know. These letters are seldom worth the trouble of answering, but most assuredly yours is not of that kind; what you write breathes the soundest metaphysics, and shews that if you have taken nothing from books, you are very capable of making an excellent one yourself, which is very uncommon, especially on such a subject.

Liberty, as it is defined by many of the schoolmen, is in fact an absurd chimera. Any one who will pay the least attention to reason, and not be satisfied with mere words, will clearly perceive, that whatever exists, or is self-created, is necessary; for if it was not necessary, it would be useless. The respectable sect of stoics thought after this manner; and, what is very singular, this truth may be found in an hundred places in Homer, who submits even Jupiter to fate.

There exists a something, which must be eternal, as is demonstrated; for without this we should have an effect without a cause. Thus all the ancients, without a single exception, believed matter to be eternal.

It is not the same with immensity, nor with an Almighty power. I do not see why it should be necessary for all space to be filled, nor do I at all comprehend the reasoning of Clarke, when he says, *that whatever necessarily exists in one place, ought necessarily to exist in every place.* Some very

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good objections have in my opinion been made to him on this subject, to which he has returned very weak answers. Wherefore is it impossible that there should be only a certain quantity of beings? I can much easier conceive a bounded nature, than an infinite nature.

Upon this article I can only have probabilities, and I can only submit to the strongest. By the universal agreement in every thing which I know of nature, I perceive a design; this design shews that there must be a first cause; that first cause is undoubtedly very powerful; but simple philosophy does not teach me to believe that this great artist is infinitely powerful. A house forty feet high proves to me that there must have been an architect; but reason alone cannot convince me that this architect could build a house ten thousand leagues high. Perhaps his powers did not admit of his building one more than forty feet high. My reason alone does not tell me, that in the immensity of space there is but one architect; and if a man was to alledge that there was a great many similar architects, I do not see how I could convince him of the contrary.

Metaphysics is the field of doubts, and the romance of the soul. We know that more than one learned doctor has spoke nonsense to us, but we have only a few truths to substitute in the room of their numberless errors. We swim in uncertainty, and have very few distinct ideas; and it must be so, since we are animals only five feet and a half high, with brains about four inches square. My brain, Sir, is the most humble servant of yours.

LETTER.

L E T T E R XXVII.

On the pretended Letters of Pope Ganganelli,
Clement XIV.

2d May, 1776.

I HAVE been so abused, my dear friend, with my ingenious and gallant letters, which I never wrote, and with so many other stupidities which have been ascribed to me, that you will pardon me for taking the part of every Cardinal or Pope with whom similar tricks are played.

I was long ago provoked with the Political Testament which was so fraudulently published in the name of Cardinal Richelieu. Could it be possible to suppose this to be the political advice of a Prime Minister, who says nothing of the King; nor of the Queen, whose situation was so doubtful; nor of his brother, who had so often conspired against him; nor of his son, the Dauphin, whose education was of such importance; nor of his enemies, against whom he had so many measures to take; nor of the Protestants of the kingdom, against whom the same King had carried on so severe a war; nor of his armies; nor of his negotiations; nor of any of his generals or ambassadors? It would be madness and folly to believe that this rhapsody was written by a Minister of State.

Every page is filled with the most ill-conceived frauds. However, the name of Cardinal Richelieu imposed for a time; and even some of the *beaux-esprits* revered the horrid mistakes with which this book swarms, as oracles. Thus it is that errors are propagated from one end of the world to the

other, until some worthy soul has courage enough to stop their farther progress.

We have had, since that time, the testaments of the Duke of Lorraine, of Colbert, of Louvois, Alberoni, Marshal Bellisle, and Mandrin. Among so many heroes I dare not rank myself; but you know that the Advocate Marchand has made my testament, in which he has had the discretion not even to include a legacy for himself.

You have seen the letters of Queen Christina, Ninon de l'Enclos, Madame de Pompadour, and of Mademoiselle de Tron to her lover, the Reverend Father de la Chaise, confessor to Louis XIV. and now come the Letters of Pope Ganganelli. They are in French, though he never wrote in that language. Ganganelli must have received incognito the gift of languages in the course of his life. These letters are entirely in the French taste. The turn of the expressions, the thoughts, the words, the style, all these are entirely French. They were printed in France; the editor is a Frenchman, born near Tours, who has assumed a name beginning with a J. and has already published a number of French works under fictitious names.

If this editor had translated genuine letters of Pope Clement XIV. into French, he would have deposited the originals in some public library. We have a right to say to him what was formerly said to the Abbé Nodot, "Shew us your manuscript of Petronius, which was found at Belgrade, or consent that nobody shall believe you. It is as false that you have the genuine satire of Petronius in your hands, as it is false that that ancient satire was the work of a Consul, and intended as a picture of Nero's conduct. Do not attempt to deceive
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men of learning; such impositions will pass only with the vulgar."

When the comedy of the Scotchwoman was published in the name of Guillaume Vadé, and of Jerome Carré, the public immediately saw the joke, and did not require legal proofs. But when the name of a Pope is brought in question, whose ashes are not yet cold, there should be no room left for suspicion; the letters with Ganganelli's subscription ought to be shewn to the whole sacred college, and deposited in the library of the Vatican, with the attestations of all who know his writing; without this, the editor will be considered all over Europe as a man who has dared to take the name of a Pope in order to sell his book. *Reus est quia filium dei se fecit.*

As for my part, I own that were even these same letters to be shewn to me supported by attestations, I would no more believe them to be the letters of Ganganelli, than I should believe the letters of Pilate to Tiberius to have been really written by Pilate.

And why am I so incredulous about these letters? It is because I have read them; because I see the counterfeit in every page. I was sufficiently intimate with the Venetian Algarotti to know that he never had the least correspondence with the Friar Ganganelli, nor with the Confessor Ganganelli, nor with the Cardinal Ganganelli, nor with the Pope Ganganelli. Pieces of advice given to me and Algarotti in a friendly manner were never written by that good monk who was afterwards a good Pope.

It is impossible that Ganganelli could have written to Mr. Stuart, a Scotchman, *my dear Sir,*

I am

I am sincerely attached to the English nation. I have an excessive love for your great poets.

What say you to an Italian, who declares to a Scotchman, *that he has an excessive love for English verse*, and yet does not understand one word of English?

The Editor goes still farther, and makes his learned Ganganelli say, *I sometimes make nocturnal visits to Newton, and at a time when all nature sleeps, I wake to read and admire him. There is no other writer who like him has united simplicity with science. This is the character of true genius, which is averse to ostentation.*

You see how the Editor puts himself in the place of his Pope, and what strange praise he bestows upon Newton. He pretends to have read him, and speaks of him as of a learned Benedictine, well versed in history, and who is, notwithstanding, very modest. A very pretty eulogium on the greatest mathematician that has ever existed; and on the man who has dissected the light.

In that same letter he takes Berkley, Bishop of Cloyne, for one of those who have written against the Christian religion, and ranks him with Spinoza and Bayle. He does not know that Berkley was one of the most able writers who has defended the Christian religion. He does not know that Spinoza has never once mentioned it, and that Bayle has not written any work expressly on so respectable a subject.

The Editor in a letter to an Abbé Lami, makes his pretended Ganganelli say, *that according to Danté the soul is the greatest miracle in the world. A Pope or a Franciscan Friar may quote Danté with all his might, to shew himself a man of letters;*

letters; but there is not a single verse in that strange poet Danté, which says what is here ascribed to him.

In another letter to a Venetian lady, Ganganelli amuses himself with refuting Locke; that is to say, Mr. Editor, much superior to Locke, does himself the pleasure of censuring him under the name of a Pope.

In a letter to Cardinal Quirini, the Editor expresses himself in the following manner: *Your Eminency, who has a great esteem for the French, has certainly been induced to overlook their levity although it may lessen their dignity. There is no harm that in all ages taken collectively there should be sparks and flames, lilies and blue-bottles, rains and dews, stars and meteors, rivers and rivulets, which is a perfect picture of nature; and to judge of the world and of times, you must unite the different views and make but one piece of the whole.*

Do you in good faith believe that the Pope wrote this farrago in French against the French?

Is it not pleasant in the hundred and eleventh letter of Ganganelli, which we are told was written soon after he was made a Cardinal, to find him saying, *We are not Cardinals to impose upon the world by a vain parade, but to be the pillars of the Holy See. Every thing about us, even our scarlet habit, serves to remind us, that we ought to exert ourselves, even to the effusion of our blood, for the support of our religion. When I see Cardinal de Tournon flying to the extremities of the world to cause the truth to be preached there in its purity, I find myself inflamed with the noble example, and am disposed to undertake every thing in the same cause.*

Would it not seem from this passage as if the Cardinal de Tournon had forsaken the pleasures
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of Rome in the year 1706, to go and preach to the Emperor of China, and to suffer martyrdom? But the real fact is, a Savoyard Priest of the name of *Maillard*, who had been educated at Rome in the college of the *Propaganda*, was sent by Pope Clement XI. to China in the year 1706, to give an account to the congregation of the *Propaganda*, of a dispute between the Jacobins and the Jesuits about the meaning of two words in the Chinese language. Maillard took the name of Tournon, and very soon was appointed Apostolical Vicar in China. He had no sooner received this appointment, than he took it into his head that he understood the Chinese language better than the Emperor Camby. He sent word to Pope Clement XI. that the Emperor and the Jesuits were Heretics. The Emperor contented himself with sending him to prison. It has been asserted, that the Jesuits had him poisoned: but before the poison had operated, it is said that he had the credit to procure a Cardinals cap from the Pope. The Chinese scarcely knew what was meant by this cap. Maillard died soon after its arrival; and this is the real history of that conceit. The Editor supposes Ganganelli to have been so ignorant as to know nothing of it.

Lastly, he who borrows the name of Pope Ganganelli, pushes his zeal so far as to make him say in his fifty-eighth letter to a Magistrate of the Republic of St. Marino, "I will not send you the book you desire; it is an ill-formed production, badly translated from the French, and abounding with heresies against morality and sound doctrine. It speaks of nothing but *humanity*; for now-a-days this is the plausible phrase which is substituted in the room of *charity*, because humanity
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is but a Pagan virtue. The modern philosophy would have nothing to do with what relates to Christianity."

You will be pleased to observe, that if our Pope dreads the word humanity, his most Christian Majesty boldly makes use of it in his edict of the 12th of April, 1770, in which he orders medicines to be distributed, gratis, to all the sick in his kingdom. The edict begins thus: *His Majesty's will is henceforth for the sake of humanity, &c.*

Mr. Editor may be as inhuman as he pleases upon paper, but he will please to allow that our Kings and Ministers may be humane. It is plain that he is strangely mistaken, but it is the case with all these gentlemen who publish their productions in this manner under respectable names. It is the rock upon which all the Testament-makers have split; it was by this chiefly that Boisguilbert was known, who dared to print his *Royal Tent* under the name of the Marshal de Vauban. Such were the authors of the Memoirs of Vordac, Montbrun, de Pontis, and many others.

I believe the pretended Ganganelli is unmasked. He made himself Pope, but 'tis I that have deposed him. If he chuses to excommunicate me for it he is very welcome.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

To the S A M E.

Upon A N E C D O T E S.

THERE is no great harm, Sir, it is true, in ascribing letters to Pope Ganganelli, and Queen
C c Christina

Christina of Sweden, which neither the one nor the other ever wrote. It is a long time since quacks began to deceive the world for money. It would seem as if the world ought to be pretty well acquainted with it, since that grave historian, Flavius Josephus, hath certified, that even in his time a beautiful writing was to be seen of the son of Seth, who was the grandson of Adam, upon astrology : that one part of the book was engraved upon a pillar of stone, to resist water when the human race were to be destroyed by a deluge ; and another part upon a pillar of brick, to resist fire, when the general conflagration should destroy the world. It is impossible to give an earlier written date to falsities. I think it was the Abbé Tilladet who said, *As soon as any thing is printed, though you have not read it, lay a wager it is not true ; I will go your halves, and it will make my fortune.*

What would you have us think of the innumerable libels, anecdotes, and court satires which have amused and plagued France from the time of the *League* to the *Fronde* ; and from the *Fronde* down to our days. The case is still worse with our neighbours ; for these last hundred years, one half of England has been writing against the other.

A Methusalem who would pass his whole life in reading, could not have time to glance over an hundredth part of these impertinencies. They all fall into contempt, but not into oblivion. You will find curious people, who collect heaps of this old rubbish, and fancy they have monuments of history, as we see others who have cabinets of butterflies and caterpillars, and think themselves Plinys.

Of

Of what facts can we get information in the history of the world? Great public events which nobody ever doubted. Cæsar was conqueror at Pharsalia, and was afterwards stabbed in the Senate. Mahomet II. took Constantinople. One half of the citizens of Paris massacred the other on the night of St. Bartholomew. There is no doubting these things; but who can penetrate through the detail of them? We may distinguish the prevailing colour at a distance, but the shadings will unavoidably escape us.

Are you willing to believe every thing Tacitus says because his style pleases and captivates you? But because he can please, it does not necessarily follow that he must always have spoken the truth. You are a little artful, and you chuse an author who is more artful than yourself. It is to no purpose that Tacitus tells us, at the beginning of his history, that he wishes to avoid both adulation and satire; and that he neither loves nor hates the Emperors of whom he writes. I would say to him, "You did hate them, because you was
" born a Roman and they were Sovereigns; you
" aimed at making them detested by mankind,
" even in their most trifling actions.

" I do not pretend to justify Domitian to you
" or to any one; but why do you seem to make
" it a crime in that Emperor, to have sent frequent messengers to inform himself of your
" father-in-law, Agricola's state of health during
" his late illness? Why should this proof of
" friendship, or at least of attention, appear to
" you to proceed rather from a secret desire of rejoicing at the death of Agricola? I could oppose to the hideous picture you have drawn of
" Tiberius, and the horrid and memorable deeds
" you

“ you relate of him, the praises bestowed upon
 “ him by the Jew Philon, who was a still greater
 “ enemy to the Roman Emperors than you. I
 “ could, even while I abhor Nero as much as you
 “ can do, puzzle you about the scheme which
 “ was long in agitation for killing his mother
 “ Agrippina, and especially about the vessel which
 “ was invented to drown her. I could point out
 “ to you my doubts about the incest in which
 “ Agrippina endeavoured to engage her son, at
 “ the very time that Nero was preparing to assassinate her. But I am not bold enough to lessen
 “ the crimes of Nero, and to dispute against
 “ Tacitus.”

It will be sufficient for me to observe to you, Sir, that if so many doubts arise concerning the histories of the first Roman Emperors, written by so many of their illustrious cotemporaries, there is still much greater reason for doubting what has been written by illiterate barbarians about people still more barbarous and ignorant than themselves.

Tell me how it happens that the Asiatic jargon about astrology, alchymy, the medicine of body and soul, has travelled round the world and governed it.

L E T T E R XXIX.

To the S A M E.

On the Story of the famous Coachman Gilbert.

YOU cannot but recollect, Sir, the famous trial of the Field Marshal Count de Morangies, which
afforded

afforded you so much employment*, and that contemptible and dreadful cabal which broke out against him. You remember a hackney coachman of the name of *Gilbert*, who was at the head of this gang, with one *Abriot*, who had been formerly clerk to an attorney, and who was at that time under a course of mercury. They led the populace like hounds, and seduced the minds of the multitude. The coachman *Gilbert* had seen his intimate friend *Liegard Dujonquay*, who could neither read nor write, admitted a Doctor of Laws, living in an unfurnished garret, and ready to purchase the place of a Counsellor of the Parliament. He had observed him in his garret, counting an hundred thousand crowns in gold; he had assisted the Doctor of Laws to place this money in order, and then to put it in bags. He had seen this young magistrate carry these hundred thousand crowns at thirteen different journies on foot to the Count de Morangies, and loaded with gold, run the space of six leagues in three hours.

The attorney's clerk, with his body covered from head to foot with ulcers and mercurial ointment, escaped from his surgeon at the risk of his life, to accompany *Gilbert*, and see this course which was worthy of the Olympic Games.

All the lower class of people and all the attorney's clerks joined these madmen, and called God to witness in favour of *Dujonquay*: next to God they called the coachman, and the

* This expression would seem to indicate this and the two preceding letters, to have been addressed to Mr. Linguet, whom we had occasion to make the subject of a former note; that gentleman having pleaded the cause of the Count de Morangies and published several Memoirs on the occasion. T.

pocky attorney's clerk. It was asserted that these two witnesses could neither be deceived themselves, nor deceive others. They had seen, and gave evidence according to conscience. The cause of the magistrate Dujonquay was so just, and his right so clear, that one *Aucour*, an usurer, purchased the action and carried it on in his name, as an old cloaths-man would buy a birth-day suit to sell again.

It was to no purpose that Mr. de Sartines, who was Lieutenant-General of the Police, assisted by the Judge in criminal matters, began prudently to check the insolence and intrigues of Dujonquay and his party, which were equally criminal and absurd. The people cried out that they were Pilates oppressing the innocent. These madmen had it written in their memorials, that the commandments of God were of no weight with Field Marshals; that every man of rank was consequently a knave; that there was no honesty but in garrets, with hackney-coachmen and attorney's clerks, who were attacked with that disorder which Don Calmet ascribes to the holy man Job. The voice of the people is the voice of God. This voice was so strong and loud, that the suit was immediately remitted by the parliament to the jurisdiction of an inferior court, to be determined in the first instance. This petty court put the Count de Morangies in prison, condemned him to restore an hundred thousand crowns which he could never have received, and adjudged three thousand six hundred livres to the generous coachman, as a reward for his honesty.

The parliament had much ado to repair the horror and ridicule of this sentence. The cabal accused the parliament of being itself a cabal.

Advocates continued to write cases, declaring that the Field Marshal had bribed the parliament, the chatelet, and the police. One of those who undertook Gilbert's defence, declared in his memorial, that the presence of this honest coachman made the judge, who examined him, tremble, and that he was another Cato, whom the satellites of a tyrant were dragging to prison.

At length, Sir, I am informed from Paris, that this Gilbert, this Cato of hackney coachmen, after having frequently escaped from the halter, has been tried lately for some flagrant crime, and found guilty of being a thief and a forger. I do not know if the cabal will save him from a capital punishment, but I know that when a rascal gets to be a leader of the mob, the party is not always dissolved by the death of their chief. A single enthusiast is enough to re-kindle it. If justice should condemn the coachman, Gilbert, to be hanged, fanaticism will sound his praise at the foot of the gallows. Gilbert will be invoked as a martyr of the people sacrificed to the court; and who knows to what length this humour may go?

I have heard a story told of an Irish priest *who lived at Paris upon disputes and masses*, and who happened one day by mistake, to put a gold chalice into his pocket, belonging to one of the king's chapels. As they were leading him to execution, one of his companions, cried out to the people, "See how they behave here to good *Catholicks*." This single word occasioned a sedition. I do not pledge myself for the truth of this story, for I seldom believe more than one in a thousand.

If you ask me how it happened, in an age so enlightened as the present, that a great part of
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the public were so wicked and foolish as to support the despicable cause of those raggamuffins who accused the Count de Morangies? I will answer you, that in these days we see no more of those criminal proceedings, which were like fields of butchery; such as that by which the Templars were condemned to be burnt alive as apostates, after having fought threescore years for the faith; such as that of a Prince of Armagnac, whose blood was spilt drop by drop on the heads of his children, by the executioners of Louis XI. or that of the Count de Montecuculli, who was quartered in the time of Francis I. because the Dauphin had drank imprudently of ice; or of the Counsellor du Bourg, who was hanged for having recommended toleration; or of one Ramus, whose bleeding corse was dragged to the gates of all the colleges, to expiate the ridicule he had offered to the quiddities of Aristotle; or of a Marshal de Marillac, who was carried to the place of execution in a sledge, because his brother was disagreeable to the Minister, &c. &c. &c. We have seen, it is true, within these few years several cruel, absurd and execrable executions, but they are not so common now as they were formerly. France and all Europe have viewed them with horror. Our ancestors during twelve centuries looked with eyes of indifference upon an uninterrupted series of public abominations: but now-a-days, the voice of philosophy seems to have checked their course. But who knows if the voice of the just and wise, which are the same, will be always able to overcome the bellings of perverse fanatics.

LETTER

L E T T E R XXX.

To the Abbé Spalanzani.

Ferney, 6th June, 1776.

YOUR letter of the 31st of May revives my former taste, and my former hopes. I had renounced the honour of restoring heads to snails*. I had the modesty to believe that I was by no means worthy of being a worker of miracles. I perfectly remember, however, to have seen new heads produced upon the slugs which I had beheaded; but some good naturalists checked my vanity at that time, by telling me that I was awkward, and had only cut their faces, the skin of which would soon grow again: but since you assure me that you have cut off real heads, and that they are grown again, *io ripiglio la mia confidenza*, and I begin once more to believe that nature is capable of every thing.

What you tell me of animals that have been a long time dead and restored to life, is certainly a much greater miracle. You have the reputation of being the best observer in Europe. All your experiments have been made with the most profound sagacity. When such a man as you has declared that he has raised the dead, we must necessarily believe him.

I do not know what the *Cotifero* and the *Tardi grado* are, nor what name our naturalists give to these small aquatic animals, which you certainly kill by bringing them upon dry land, and after a

* The Abbé's treatise on *Animal Reproductions*, has been translated into English by Dr. Maty. T.

considerable time restore them to life by plunging them again into their natural element.

After having made such wonderful experiments, you condescend to ask my opinion about the souls of the *Cotifero* and the *Tardi grado*. What becomes of their soul? Is it immaterial? Does it grow again? Or do they take another?

I am disturbed, Sir, about every soul, and my own among the rest. But I have been a great while persuaded of the immense and unknown power of the Author of Nature. I have always believed that he can bestow the faculty of having sentiments, ideas, and memory, upon whatever beings he thinks proper; that he can take away these faculties and restore them again; and that we have often taken for a substance what in fact was only a faculty of that substance. Attraction and gravitation are qualities; they are faculties. There is both in the animal and vegetable kingdoms a thousand similar springs, whose energy we are sensible of, but of the cause of which we must ever remain ignorant.

If the *Cotifero* and *Tardi grado*, after being dead and rotten, resume their motions and sensations, engender, eat and digest, we can no more know how nature has restored to them these faculties, than we can know how she first bestowed them, for the one is not more incomprehensible than the other. I own I shall be curious to know the reasons why the great Being who is the Author of all, who gives us life, and deprives us of it, hath granted the faculty of resurrection only to the *Cotifero* and *Tardi grado*. The whales ought to be very jealous of these little fresh-water fish.

If any one has a right, Sir, to explain this mystery, it is you. It would be well to know likewise,

likewise, if these little animals that come to life a number of times, do not at last die in earnest; and how many resurrections they can depend upon.

It was probable from them that the Greeks formerly were made acquainted with the resurrection of Athalida, Pelops, Hippolitus, Alcestes, and Pyrrhus. It is a pity that the secret should be lost. I believe it is that great observer, Mr. Bonnet, who is of opinion that we shall rise again with our fore, but without our back parts; and this is the end of the end, &c.

L E T T E R XXXI.

To Mr. Bailly, of the Academy of Sciences;
Author of a Book full of Genius and Learning,
on the Astronomy of the Ancients.

Y O U imitate the Missionaries, Sir, who go to convert people in the countries we have been speaking of. When once they have convinced a poor Indian of the creation *ex nihilo*, they lead him gradually to all the other sublime truths, with which he is astonished. You are not satisfied with having informed me of truths which have long been concealed, but would likewise have me believe in your ancient people, now lost indeed, but who invented astronomy, and taught it to the nations around them before they left the earth. You have staggered and almost converted me.

In the first place, I am struck with your very ingenious and even plausible conjecture, that

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astronomy was first discovered in that climate where the longest day is of sixteen hours, and the shortest only of eight; but my partiality for the ancient Brachmans, the masters of Pythagoras, has a little with-held me.

I had long ago read Bernier. He has neither your knowledge, nor your sagacity or style. He seemed to me to speak of the ancient Indian philosophy, as an Indian would speak of ours if he had never conversed with any but our under-graduates, instead of being informed by such men as you. Bernier, you say, made a short voyage to Benares; I allow it; but pray did he converse with the few Bramins who understand the Shasta language? Two of the Council of the English East-India Company at Calcutta, which is but a little way from Benares, assured me some years ago, that the truly learned Bramins very seldom hold any correspondence with foreigners: and Mr. le Gentil, who knows more of the matter than they do, owns that the learned in the province next to Pondicherry, hold us in the contempt with which their ancestors honoured the Portuguese.

If an Hindou was to come to Paris or Rome, to hear a Professor of the Propaganda, or the College of Cholets, and was to judge of us by these two animals, would he not take us all for fools and madmen?

It seems however very extraordinary to me, Sir, that a people who had certainly studied the mathematics for five thousand years, should be fallen into that stupidity which Bernier and other travellers impute to them. How is it possible that in the same town where geometry and astronomy were invented, they can believe that the moon

moon is fifty thousand leagues beyond the sun? This contrast distressed me; but the adventure of Galileo and his Judges has distressed me still more, and I say to myself like Harlequin, *Tutto il mondo e fatto come la nostra famiglia.*

After this, I fancied to myself, that a nation may have been formerly well instructed, very industrious, and very respectable, and yet in these days very ignorant in many respects, and perhaps even contemptible, although they may have many more schools now than they had formerly. If you was to go now-a-days, Sir, to the Sacred College, and propose to them to build a *Quinquerem**, I question if you would be as well served as in the time of Augustus. The Tartar government may have brought about as wonderful changes in India, as the two keys of St Peter have produced at Rome.

I will confess every thing to you. I observed, that formerly our nations of the temperate zone, had no idea that the earth was inhabited beyond the fiftieth degree of North latitude; I honoured the Brachmans for having discovered, that the longest day in summer was double the shortest day in winter, and I pardoned the Greeks for having placed the greatest darkness about the fiftieth degree.

Lastly, Sir, you must excuse me, if the weakness of my organs was such as not to admit of my believing that astronomy could possibly originate among the Usbecks and the Calmucks. I have inhabited for these last four and twenty years, a climate covered as theirs is with snow and hoar frost, for six months in the year at least; our sum-

* The *Quinqueremis* was a galley with five oars in a seat. T.

mers seldom giving us fine days, and never clear nights. I had for a long time with me an agreeable Tartar, who was sent to me by the Empress of Russia. He assured me that Mount Caucasus is not more agreeable than Mount Jura; and I imagine that they cannot easily be tempted to observe the stars carefully who live under such a cloudy sky, especially if they are not provided with every assistance necessary.

It is true, that the Abbé Chappe observed the transit of Venus over the Sun at Tobolsky about the fifty-eighth degree, in the coldest country and most cloudy sky; but he was provided with all the science of Europe, the best instruments, and a robust constitution. However, he did not long survive the fatigue.

I was always of opinion that astronomy must have had its origin in the country where they have the finest nights. The idea that our poor globe was warmer formerly than it is at present, and that it grows gradually colder, made but little impression up me. I have never read Mr. Mairan's central fire; and since we have no longer any belief in Tartarus and Phlegethon, the central fire seemed to me to have no great credit.

The fable of the Phoenix does not appear to me to have been invented by the inhabitants of Mount Caucasus. But after all, Sir, your system seems to be supported by so much erudition, and by so great a degree of probability, that I feel no difficulty in sacrificing my doubts to your superior learning in these matters.

I am not worthy of being admitted into one of those ancient heavens you speak so well of, but I intreat you to grant me a place in the forty-ninth degree.

PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE

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MANNERS AND SPIRIT OF NATIONS.

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ON THE

MANNERS AND SPIRIT OF NATIONS

PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE.

INTRODUCTION.

YOU wish that ancient history had been written by philosophers, because you are desirous of studying it philosophically. You have been searching after useful truths, and you have found, you say, hardly any thing but useless errors. Let us therefore unite together in our researches, and let us endeavour to bring to light some of those precious monuments that lie buried amidst the ruins of ages.

We will begin by enquiring, whether the globe we inhabit was formerly such as it is at present.

It is possible that our world may have undergone as many changes, as states have experienced of revolutions. It seems certain, that the sea formerly covered immense tracts of land, which at present afford great cities and rich fields of corn; while others that were formerly inhabited, now form a part of the ocean.

The quicksands in the northern parts of Africa, and in the parts of Syria bordering on Egypt, are perhaps nothing else than the sands of the sea heaped together, as the waters gradually retired. Herodotus, who does not always assert falsehoods, doubtless tells us what is very true, when he relates that according to the account of the Egyptian priests, the island of Delta was formerly covered by the sea. Might we not say the same thing of those sandy countries that are situated towards the Baltic sea? Do not the Cy-

clades, from the shallows that surround them, and the vegetation which is easily discovered under the sea that washes their shores, appear evidently to have been formerly a part of the continent? Do not the straits of Sicily, that ancient whirlpool of Charybdis and Scylla, which is still dangerous for small vessels, seem to prove to us that Sicily was originally joined to Apulia, as the ancients universally believed? Mount Vesuvius and Mount Ætna have the same foundations under the sea, that separates them. Vesuvius did not begin to be a dangerous volcano, till Ætna ceased to be such; and even to this day, when either of the two is at rest, the other emits flames. A violent earthquake probably destroyed that part of the mountain, which joined Naples to Sicily.

All Europe knows that the sea has swallowed up one half of Friesland. I myself, about forty years ago, saw the spires of eighteen villages, near Mordyke, which were still to be seen above the inundation, but which have since sunk beneath the surface of the waters. It is certain that the sea quits its ancient shores in a very short space of time. Of this we have instances in Aiguemorte, Frejus and Ravenna, which were formerly sea-ports, but are now no longer such. Damietta, where it was usual for us to land, at the time of the crusades, is now ten miles from the sea; the sea is every day retiring from Rosetta. Nature seems to be liable to revolutions in every part of the universe; and if stars have been lost in the immensity of space, if one of the Pleiades has for a long time disappeared, and if the same thing has happened to several other stars in the milky way, we surely ought no longer

to be surpris'd that our little globe is subject to continual changes.

I would not venture however to assert, that the sea has formed, or even extended to all the mountains in the world. The shells found near these mountains, may have been formerly the dwellings of those little testaceous creatures that inhabited the lakes; and these lakes having been destroyed by earthquakes, may have emptied themselves into other inferior lakes. The *cornua Ammonis*, or horns of Ammon, the *glossopetræ*, and other petrefactions, have appeared to me to be terrestrial fossils. I have never ventured to think that these *glossopetræ* can possibly be the tongues of the sea dog, and I am of his opinion, who said, he would as soon believe, that thousands of women had come to deposit their *conchæ veneris* on the sea shore, as suppose that thousands of sea dogs had left their tongues there.

Let us be careful not to mix the doubtful with the certain, or to confound falsehood with truth. We have sufficient proofs of the great revolutions of the globe, without going in search of new ones.

The most considerable of all these revolutions must have been the loss of the *terra Atlantica*, if it is true that such a part of the world ever existed. It is probable that this continent was nothing more than the island of Madeira, which was discovered perhaps by the Phœnicians, the boldest navigators of antiquity; and having been afterwards forgotten, was found again at the beginning of the fifteenth century of our vulgar æra.

In a word, it seems evident from the interruptions that appear in every part of the *terra firma* that is watered by the sea; from the gulphs that have been formed by its irruptions; and from

the immense number of islands that lie scattered in the midst of the ocean; that the two hemispheres have lost upwards of two thousand leagues of land on one side, and that they have regained them on the other.

Of the different Species of Mankind.

A SUBJECT much more interesting to us, is the sensible difference betwixt the several species of mankind, who people the four known quarters of our globe.

He must be blind indeed, who can doubt that the whites, the negroes, the Hottentots, the Laplanders, the Chinese, and the Americans, are races of men entirely different from one another.

There are few travellers who pass through Leyden, without seeing the preparation of the *reticulum mucosum* of a negro, dissected by the celebrated Ruysch. The rest of this membrane is preserved in the cabinet of curiosities at Peterburgh. This membrane is black, and it is to it that the negroes owe their black colour, which they lose only in such diseases as are capable of destroying this membrane, and extravasating the fat from its cells, so as to produce white spots under the skin.

Their round eyes, their flat nose, their thick lips, the shape of their ears, the wool upon their heads, and even the measure of their understanding, are all so many proofs of an immense difference betwixt them and the rest of mankind. And to shew that this difference is not the effect of climate, it is right to observe, that negroes and negresses transported into the coldest countries, produce animals of their own species; and that

that the mulattos are only a bastard race of a black man and a white woman, or of a white man and a black woman.

The Albinos are a very little race, who inhabit the interior parts of Africa, but are far from being numerous. Their weakness does not allow them to wander far from the caverns in which they dwell; yet the negroes now and then catch some of them, and we purchase them of the negroes, for the sake of curiosity. I have seen two of these Albinos, and a thousand Europeans have seen them. To pretend that they are negro dwarfs, whose skin has been whitened by a kind of leprosy, would be the same thing as if we were to say, that the negroes are whites blackened by the leprosy. An Albino has no more resemblance to a negro of the coast of Guinea, than he has to an Englishman or a Spaniard. Their whiteness is not like ours, it has nothing of what we call a flesh colour, no mixture of white and brown; it is more like the colour of linen, or rather of white wax. Their hair and their eyebrows are like the finest silk; their eyes are in no respect like the eyes of other men, but greatly resemble the eyes of partridges. They resemble the Laplanders in point of stature, but their heads are not like those of any other nation, since they have a different kind of hair, and different eyes and ears, so that they have no other affinity to the rest of mankind, than what is derived from the shape of their body, their erect posture, and their possessing the faculty of speech, and of thinking in a degree very remote from ours.

The apron with which nature has furnished the Hottentots, the soft and lax skin of which extends
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from the navel, half way down the thighs*; the black nipple of the Saymoyede women; the beard of Europeans, and the beardless chins of the Americans, are all such remarkable distinctions, that it is hardly possible to suppose that they are not so many different species.

If it should be asked whence the Americans derive their origin? We may put the same question in regard to the inhabitants of the Terra Australis. We may reply, that providence, who planted men in Norway, planted them likewise in America, and under the antarctic circle, in the same manner as she has furnished all those countries with trees and herbage.

Several learned men have suspected that certain races of men, or of animals approaching to man have perished; and the Albinos are in such inconsiderable number, are so weak, and withal, so ill treated by the negroes, that it is to be feared that this species will not long subsist.

Almost all the ancient writers speak of satyrs, nor do I see that their existence is impossible. It is still customary in Calabria to smother certain monsters which the women of that country sometimes bring into the world. It is not improbable that in hot countries, the girls have sometimes copulated with monkies. Herodotus in his second book tells us, that when he travelled into Egypt, there was a woman who copulated publicly with a goat, in the province of Mendés; and he appeals to all Egypt for the truth of this. In the eighteenth chapter of Leviticus, it is for-

* This appendage is now known to have no existence but in the imagination of travellers. Natural History has been too long disgraced by such fables. T.

bidden to commit abomination with beasts. This sufficiently shews that such abominations were common, and until we are better informed, it is to be presumed that monstrous productions would sometimes be the result of such abominable amours. But when they did happen to exist, they could have no influence on the human race; they were like mules who are unable to propagate their species. In regard to the duration of human life, (if we except that line of descendants from Adam, which we find mentioned in the Jewish books) it is probable that all the different generations of mankind have enjoyed nearly the same short life we do, as animals, trees, and all the productions of nature have always had the same duration.

But it seems right to observe, that commerce not having always furnished mankind with the productions and diseases of other climates, and men having been more robust and more active in the simplicity of a rural life, for which they seem to have been intended by nature, they consequently enjoyed a more uniform state of health, and lived longer than they can possibly do amidst the luxuries and unhealthy employments of great towns; so that if in Constantinople, Paris, or London, one in twenty thousand lives to be an hundred years old; it is probable that twenty in twenty thousand formerly attained to that age. This was found to be the case in several parts of America, where men still continued to live in a state of nature.

The plague and the small pox which the Arabian caravans first communicated to the people of Asia and Europe, were for a long time unknown; so that the human species multiplied itself in Asia, and in the fine climates of Europe, much

more easily than elsewhere. Accidental diseases and wounds were indeed more fatal perhaps, than they are at present; but the advantage of never being attacked by the plague or the small pox, made amends for all the dangers that are inseparable from our nature; so that all things considered, we may venture to suppose that mankind were formerly much healthier, and of course much happier than they have been since the establishment of great empires.

Of the Antiquity of Nations.

ALMOST all nations, but more especially those of Asia, reckon a series of ages that astonishes us. This conformity betwixt them, is at least a sufficient inducement to us, to inquire whether their notions on this head are well-founded.

It is certain that an immense space of time is required to form men into a society, and to render that society a powerful, warlike, and learned nation. Thus we find, that in all America, at the time it was first discovered, there were only two kingdoms; and that in neither of these, they had invented the art of writing. All the rest of that vast continent was, and still is divided into little societies, to whom the arts are wholly unknown. All these herds live in huts, cloathing themselves with the skins of beasts in cold countries, and going almost naked in the more temperate climates. Some of them live by hunting, while others content themselves with the vegetables with which nature has furnished them. They have not sought after any other mode of life, because men do not wish for things that are unknown

known to them. Their industry has never extended beyond their wants. The Samoyedes, the Laplanders, the inhabitants of the northern part of Siberia, and those of Kamschatka are still more remote from civilization, than the people of America. The greater part of the negroes and the Hottentots, are plunged in the same stupidity.

A concurrence of favourable circumstances, during a series of ages, is requisite to form a numerous society of men, united under the same laws. The same thing is even necessary for the formation of a language. Mankind would not articulate, unless they were taught to pronounce words; they would utter only confused cries, and would make themselves understood only by signs. Children speak after a certain time only by imitation, and they would pronounce with extreme difficulty, if they were suffered to pass their earlier years without being taught to speak.

There was perhaps more time required for men of singular talents to instruct the rest of mankind in the first rudiments of an imperfect and barbarous language, than there was afterwards to form them into a society. There are even whole nations who have never been able to form a regular language, or to pronounce it distinctly. Such, according to Pliny, were the Troglodytes; and such even now are the people who inhabit towards the Cape of Good Hope. But how remote is this barbarous jargon, from the art of painting our ideas! the distance is immense.

This brutal state, in which mankind for a long time remained, must have rendered the human species extremely rare in every climate. Men could hardly supply their wants, and as they

could not understand, so they were unable to assist one another. The beasts of prey having more instinct than them, must have covered the earth, and devoured a part of the human species.

Men could have no other defence against those animals, than by throwing stones, and arming themselves with the branches of trees; and hence perhaps, came that confused notion of the ancients, that the first heroes fought against lions and wild boars with clubs.

The most populous countries, doubtless, were the hot climates, where mankind found an easy and plentiful nourishment in the cocoas, the dates, the pine apples, and the rice that grow spontaneously in those parts of the world. Hence it is very probable, that India, China, and the borders of the Tigris and the Euphrates, were numerously peopled, at a time when the other regions were almost destitute of inhabitants; and when in our northern climates, it was much easier to find a herd of wolves, than a society of men.

Of the Knowledge of the Soul.

IF we were to be asked what idea mankind entertained of the soul in the primitive ages? We might say, just such a notion as our country people have of it, before they have heard, or even after they have learnt the catechism. They could acquire only a confused idea on this subject, and even on this they never reflected. Nature was too kind to them to make them metaphysicians; and nature is constantly and every where the same. When they experienced any extraordinary evils, she made them sensible that some being existed superior to man. She made them

them sensible likewise, that there is in man a something that acts and thinks; but they made no distinction between this faculty and that of life.

By what degrees have mankind been led to imagine, that in our physical being, there exists another that is metaphysical? It is certain that men who were solely employed about their wants, were not philosophers.

When society came to be more improved, a small number of men might have leisure to reflect. It would now and then happen, that a man sensibly affected by the death of his father, or his brother, or his wife, would see the person he regretted in a dream. Two or three dreams must have been sufficient to alarm the whole clan. They would naturally say, here is a dead person, who appears to the living, and yet the body of the deceased is eaten by the worms, and continues always in the same place. It must therefore be something that was in him, that thus moves through the air. It is his soul, his shade, his apparition. Such is the natural reasoning of ignorance, when beginning to reason. This opinion was that of all the primitive times, of which we have any knowledge, and consequently, it must have been that of more remote ages, with which we are unacquainted. The idea of a being purely immaterial, could not possibly present itself to minds acquainted only with matter. There must have been blacksmiths, carpenters, masons, and labourers, before a man could be found who had leisure to meditate. Doubtless, all the manual arts were known many ages before mankind had any idea of metaphysics.

We may remark, by the bye, that in the middle ages of Greece, at the time of Homer; the
soul

soul was considered only as an ærial image of the body. We find Ulysses described as seeing the ghosts of deceased persons in hell, and he could not be supposed to have seen pure spirits.

We shall have occasion hereafter to enquire how the Greeks borrowed from the Egyptians their notion of hell, and of the deification of the dead; and how they believed, as well as other nations, in a second life, without suspecting the soul to be spiritual. Indeed, they never imagined that an incorporeal being could possibly experience either good or evil. I believe Plato is the first who speaks of a being purely spiritual; and perhaps this was one of the greatest efforts of the human understanding. But we are not yet arrived at those improved times; we are considering the world in its rude and uninformed state.

Of the Religion of the first Men.

IT is probable that after a great number of ages, when some few societies were established, men began to have some notions of religion, and some kind of rude worship. When mankind were wholly employed in the care of supporting life, they would hardly direct their thoughts to the Author of life, nor could they have any knowledge of those affinities of all the parts of the universe, those means, and those innumerable ends, which to a philosopher announce the existence of an eternal architect.

The knowledge of a God the creator, rewarder, and avenger, is the result of cultivated reason, or of revelation.

All mankind therefore, during a series of ages, were what the inhabitants of the southern parts of Africa,

Africa, and of several islands, as well one half of the Americans are at this day. These people have no idea of one only God, the maker of all things, who is present every where, and exists by himself in eternity. And yet we ought not to call them Atheists in the usual sense of the word; for they do not deny the existence of the Supreme Being; they know him not; they have no idea of him. The Hottentots take an insect, and the negroes a serpent for their protector. Amongst the Americans, some adore the moon, and others a tree; and there are many who are absolutely without any religious worship.

The Peruvians, who were a civilized nation, adored the sun. Either Mango Capac had made them believe that he was the son of that luminary, or their reason had told them that they owed some gratitude to the body that animates nature.

To know how all these religions, or rather superstitions were established, we have nothing more to do than to observe the progress of the human mind when left to itself. An horde of men, for instance, who are almost savages, see the fruits blasted that are to nourish them; an inundation sweeps away some of their huts, while others are destroyed by lightning. Who is the author of these misfortunes? it cannot be one of their fellows, for they are all sufferers alike. It must therefore be some secret power, whom they have offended and whom they must therefore appease. How are they to do this? By behaving to it as they do to those whom they are desirous of pleasing, by making it little presents. There is a serpent in the neighbourhood; perhaps it is this serpent; they carry milk to him and place it near the spot he frequents; from that moment
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he becomes sacred, and he is invoked when they go to war with their neighbours, who on their side have chosen some other protector.

Other tribes find themselves in the same situation, but meeting with no object that can fix their fear and adoration, they appeal in general to the Being, whom they suspect to have inflicted this evil on them, they call him *Master, Lord, Chief, Ruler*.

This idea being more conformable than any other to the dawn of reason, at length becomes more firmly established, so as to be deeply rooted in every mind when the nation is more numerous. Thus we find that several nations had no other God than *the Master, or the Lord*. Among the Phœnicians it was *Adonai*; and *Baal, Melkom*, or *Adad* among the Syrians. All these names, signify *the Lord, or the Powerful*.

After a time therefore each state had its tutelary divinity, without having any just idea of a God, and without being able to imagine that the neighbouring state, had not a protector peculiar to itself. It was natural to suppose that as one had a Lord, the other had one likewise; and the only difficulty seemed to be, to know which of all these divinities would be the most powerful, when different nations were at war with one another.

It was this without doubt, that gave rise to the opinion which was so long and so generally received, that each nation was in reality protected by the divinity they had chosen. This idea was so deeply impressed on the minds of men, that long after the times we are speaking of, we find it adopted by the Jews themselves. Jephthah says to the Ammonites, " Wilt thou not possess that
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“ which Chemosh thy God giveth thee to possess?
 “ So whomsoever our Lord Adonai shall drive
 “ out before us, them will we possess.”

In Jeremiah and Isaiah we meet with two other passages that are equally striking, where it is said, “ What reason has the Lord Melkom had “ to possess himself of the land of Gad ?” These expressions clearly shew that the Jews, though the servants of Adonai, acknowledged however the Lord Chemosh and the Lord Melkom.

Nothing was more common than to adopt strange gods. The Greeks acknowledged those of the Egyptians, I do not say the ox Apis, or the dog Anubis, but Ammon and the twelve great gods. The Romans adored all the gods of the Greeks. Jeremiah, Amos, and St. Stephen, assure us, that the Jews, during the forty years they passed in the wilderness, acknowledged only Moloch, Remphan, and Kium, and that they offered up no sacrifices, nor made any offerings to the Lord Adonai, whom they adored afterwards. It is true that the Pentateuch speaks only of the golden calf, which is mentioned by none of the prophets. But this is not the place to investigate this great difficulty; it will be sufficient for us equally to revere Moses, Jeremiah, Amos, and St. Stephen, who seem to contradict each other, and whom we endeavour to reconcile.

I will only observe, that excepting those times of war and bloody fanaticism which extinguished all humanity, and rendered the manners, the laws, and the religion of one people, objects of horror to those of another country, all nations seem to have thought it right, that their neighbours should have their particular Gods, and

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*Judic.
Chap. 11.*

*Amos
5. v. 25-26*

have often adopted the worship and religious ceremonies of strangers.

Even the Jews, notwithstanding their horror for the rest of mankind, which increased with time, imitated the circumcision practised by the Arabians and Egyptians, and took from the latter their distinction of meats, their ablutions, their processions, their sacred dances, the goat Hazazel and the red cow. They frequently adored the Baal, and the Belphegor of their neighbours; so much do nature and habit almost always prevail over the law, especially when this law is not generally known by the people. Thus Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, made it no difficulty to marry two sisters, who were what we call idolaters and daughters of an idolatrous father. Moses himself married the daughter of an idolatrous priest of Midian.

Those same Jews who exclaimed so much against the religions of other nations, speaking in the sacred writings of Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus who were idolaters, stile them the Lord's anointed. Elisha allowed the idolater Naaman to go into the temple of Rimmon. But let us not anticipate any thing; we well know that mankind are perpetually contradicting themselves in their customs and laws; we ought not to digress from the subject of which we are treating; let us therefore continue to inquire how the different religions were established.

The most civilized people of Asia on this side of the Euphrates adored the stars. The Chaldæans before the time of the first Zoroaster, worshipped the sun, as the Peruvians did afterwards in another hemisphere. This error would seem to be very natural to man, since it has had so many followers

followers in Asia and America. A petty and almost savage nation is contented with having a single protector, but no sooner is it become more numerous, than we find it increasing the number of its gods. Thus the Egyptians began by adoring Isbeth or Isis, and ended by worshipping cats. The first homage of the Romans in their rustic state was paid to Mars, but those people when masters of the world, added the goddess of the act of marriage, and the god of the privies to the number of their deities. And yet Cicero and all the philosophers acknowledged a Supreme and all powerful God. Their reason had brought them back to the point, from which men in a savage state set out by instinct.

Apotheoses, or deifications, could not be thought of, till long after some kind of religious worship had been established. (It is not natural for us to make a god of a man, whom we have seen brought into the world like ourselves, exposed like us to the diseases, cares, and miseries inseparable from human nature, experiencing the same humiliating wants, and at length dying and becoming food for worms. But here is what happened amongst the people of almost every nation, after a series of several centuries.)

A man who had performed great actions, or who had rendered essential services to mankind, could not indeed be considered as a god by those who had seen him tremble with a fever, or satisfy the calls of nature; but enthusiasts would easily persuade themselves, that he who had such eminent qualities must certainly derive them from a god; they considered him therefore as the son of a god. Thus the gods had children in all the parts of the world, for to say nothing of the

reveries of the many nations that preceded the Greeks, Bacchus, Perseus, Hercules, Castor and Pollux, were the sons of gods; Romulus was the son of a god; Alexander was declared in Egypt to be the son of a god; a certain Odin, amongst our northern nations, was said to be the son of a god: and Mango Capac in Peru, was considered as the offspring of the sun. Albulgazi, who wrote the history of the Moguls, relates that Alanku, one of Genghis-kan's grandmothers, was impregnated when a virgin by a ray from heaven. Genghis-kan himself passed for the son of a god. And when pope Innocent deputed brother Ascelin to Batoukan, the grandson of Genghis, that monk having, being able only to get himself introduced to one of the visirs, informed him that he came on the part of God's vicar; upon which the visir replied, "Does not that vicar know that he owes homage and tribute to the great Batoukan, my master, who is the son of god."

Amongst men who were fond of the marvellous, the transition from a son of god to a god, was by no means difficult. Three or four generations were sufficient to establish the same honours in favour of the son, as had been paid to the father; thus, temples were raised to all those whom mankind considered as the offspring of a supernatural commerce of the divinity with their wives and daughters.

Volumes might be written on this subject; but all those volumes may be reduced to two words, and these are, that the greater part of the human species was for a long time senseless and stupid; and that perhaps, the most senseless of all were those

those who have endeavoured to explain these absurd fables, and to combine reason with folly.

Of Customs and Sentiments common to almost all the ancient Nations.

NATURE being every-where the same, mankind must necessarily have adopted the same truths and the same errors, in things that fall immediately under the senses, and that are the most striking to the imagination. They would naturally attribute the noise and the effects of thunder to the power of a superior being inhabiting the air. The people who dwelt near the sea, and who saw their lands overflowed by the high tides at the full moon, would be led to consider the moon as the cause of every thing that happened at that time.

In their religious ceremonies, almost all of them turned towards the east, not considering that there is neither east nor west, but paying a kind of homage to the sun, who rose in their sight.

Amongst animals, the serpent would appear to them to be endued with superior understanding, because from sometimes seeing him renew his skin, they would suppose him to have the power of growing young again, and hence, would consider him as immortal. Thus, we find that in Egypt and Greece, this reptile was the symbol of immortality. The large serpents that were to be seen near fountains, prevented timid persons from coming near to them. This soon gave rise to an opinion, that they were the guardians of certain treasures. Thus, a serpent guarded the golden apples of the Hesperides; while another protected the golden fleece; and in the mysteries

teries of Bacchus, they carried the image of a serpent guarding a bunch of golden grapes.

The serpent had therefore the reputation of being the most crafty of animals; and hence, the ancient Indian fable, that God having created man, gave him a drug which was to render him immortal; that the man having entrusted his ass with this divine present, and the ass being thirsty upon the road, the serpent conducted him to a fountain, and while the ass was drinking, contrived to get the drug for himself, so that man lost immortality through his negligence, while the serpent acquired it by his cunning. Many other tales of serpents and asses have the same origin.

These serpents were malicious animals; but as they possessed something of a divine nature, none but a god could possibly destroy them. Thus the serpent Python was destroyed by Apollo; and thus Ophionés the great serpent, waged war with the gods, a long time before the Greeks had forged their Apollo. A fragment of Pherecydes relates, that this fable of the great serpent was one of the most ancient of Phœnicia.

We have already observed that dreams would naturally introduce the same superstition in every part of the world. I am alarmed in the day-time at the ill-health of my wife or my son; at night I dream that they are dead; they die some days afterwards, and there can be no doubt but the gods sent me this dream. If this does not happen, I conclude that the gods have sent me a false dream. Thus, in Homer, Jupiter sends a false dream to Agamemnon, the chief of the Greeks. All dreams, whether true or false, were supposed to come from heaven. Oracles were
established

established in this manner in every part of the world.

A woman comes to consult the magi, whether her husband will die in the course of the year. One answers her yes, the other no. It is very certain that one of the two must be in the right. If the husband lives, the woman is silent; if he happens to die, she proclaims throughout the town, that the person who foretold his death, is a divine prophet. There were men soon to be met with in every country, who foretold future events, and discovered things the most secret. These people were called *Seers* by the Egyptians, according to Manethon, as we are told by Josephus in his discourse against Appion.

There were such Seers in Chaldæa and Syria. Each temple had its oracles. Those of Apollo obtained so considerable a reputation, that Rollin in his *Ancient History*, repeats the answers given by Apollo to Cræsus. The god divines that the king is causing a tortoise to be baked in a brass pan, and tells him that his reign will be at an end, when a male is seated on the throne of the Persians. Rollin does not enquire whether these predictions, which are worthy of Nostradamus, were made after the events were determined. He does not doubt the skill of the priests of Apollo, and he believes that God permitted Apollo to speak the truth. This was probably with a view to confirm the Pagans in their religion.

A question far more philosophical, in which all the great civilized nations from India to Greece seem to have agreed, is that which relates to the origin of good and evil.

The first theologians of all countries would certainly put that question to themselves, which
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all of us do before we are fifteen years old, why is there evil in the world?

162 - In India, they were of opinion, that Adimo the son of Brama, produced good men from the right side of his navel, and bad men from the left. They therefore considered this left side as the origin of moral and physical evil. The Egyptians had their Typhon, who was the enemy of Osiris. The Persians imagined that Arimanes* broke the egg that had been laid by Oromazes, and introduced sin into it. The Pandora of the Greeks is well known, and may be considered as the most beautiful of all the allegories that have been transmitted to us by the ancients. The allegory of Job was certainly written in Arabic, since the Hebrew and Greek translations have preserved several Arabic terms. This book, which is of very high antiquity, represents Satan, who is the Arimanes of the Persians, and the Typhon of the Egyptians, as wandering upon earth, and asking leave of the Lord to afflict Job. Satan appears subordinate to the Lord, but we find him a very powerful being, capable of sending diseases into the world, and of killing animals.

It appears in fact, that all nations without knowing it, were agreed in the belief of two principles, so that all the known world were in some measure Manichæans.

Expiations could not fail to be adopted in all countries; for where was the man who had not committed some crime against society, or in whom the instinct of his reason did not excite some feeling of remorse? They observed that water washed away the filth of the body and of cloaths, and that metals were purified by fire; they concluded

* See the *Essay on the Manners*, &c. vol. I. page 60.

therefore,

therefore, that water and fire would in the same manner purify the soul; hence, there was no temple without salutary waters and fires.

Mankind bathed themselves in the Ganges, the Indus, or the Euphrates, at the new moon, or at the times when it was eclipsed; and by this immersion, they expiated their sins. If they did not purify themselves in the Nile, it was because the penitents would have been in danger of being devoured by crocodiles. But the priests who purified themselves for the people, plunged into large tubs, and likewise bathed the persons in them, who came to ask pardon of the gods. The Greeks in all their temples had sacred baths, as well as sacred fires, and these were the universal symbols amongst all nations of the purity of the soul. In fine, superstitions seem to have been established in every country, except amongst the Chinese literati.

Of SAVAGES.

DO you mean, by savages, the rustics living in huts, with their families, and a few animals; incessantly exposed to all the intemperance of the seasons; knowing only the land that nourishes them, or the market to which they sometimes go, either to sell their provisions, or to purchase a few coarse garments; speaking a jargon that is unintelligible in towns; having but few ideas, and of course, but few expressions; subservient, they know not why, to a person to whom they every year carry the half of what they have earned by the sweat of their brow; assembling together on certain days, in a kind of barn, in order to celebrate ceremonies they cannot comprehend,

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and to listen to a man dressed differently from themselves, and whom they do not understand; quitting sometimes their cottages at the beat of drum, and engaging themselves to go to kill or to be killed in a strange country, for a quarter of what they might earn by their labour at home? There are such savages as these in every part of Europe. And we must allow that the people of Canada, and the Hottentots, whom we are pleased to call savages, are infinitely superior to ours. The Huron, the Ilinese, and the Hottentot, have the art of fabricating every thing they stand in need of, and our rustics are incapable of this. The savages of America and Africa are free, whereas our savages have not even an idea of liberty.

The pretended savages of America, are sovereigns who receive ambassadors from the colonies of Europeans, whom avarice and levity have transplanted into their country. They are no strangers to honour, whereas our European savages have never so much as heard it spoken of. They have a country, which they love, and are anxious to defend; they conclude treaties, they fight courageously, and often speak with an energy that is truly heroic. I would ask whether there is a nobler answer recorded by Plutarch, of any of the great men of antiquity, than that which was made by a Canadian chief to some Europeans, who wanted him to give up his patrimony. "We were born, said he, upon this spot; our fathers are buried here; shall we then say to the bones of our fathers, rise up, and go with us into a strange land?"

These Canadians were Spartans, in comparison of the rustics who vegetate in our villages, or
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of the Sybarites * who enervate themselves in our towns.

Do you mean, by savages, two legged animals, walking occasionally upon all four, wandering in the woods, copulating at random, forgetting the women with whom they have had a commerce of this sort, knowing neither their sons nor their fathers, and living like brutes, without having either the resources or the instinct of brutes? Some writers have asserted that this is the true state of man, and that we have only miserably degenerated since we quitted it. I can never believe, however, that this solitary life, attributed to our first fathers, is compatible with human nature.

We hold, or I am deceived, the first rank (if I may be allowed the expression) amongst those animals who live in troops, as is the case with bees, ants, beavers, geese, sheep, &c. If we meet a wandering bee, ought we to conclude that this bee is in a state of pure nature, and that those who are at work in the hive, have degenerated?

Has not each animal its irresistible instinct, which he obeys? What is this instinct? A certain arrangement of organs which are brought to perfection in time. This instinct therefore does not take place immediately, because the organs have not acquired their full growth,

Is it not evident that animals, as well as all other beings, invariably adhere to the law which nature has given to their species. The bird

* The inhabitants of Sybaris were so given to pleasure and effeminacy, that their luxury became proverbial amongst the ancients. T.

makes its nest, as the planets move round their orbits, from a principle that never changes. How then can man alone have changed? If he had been destined to lead a solitary life like other carnivorous animals, would it have been possible for him so far to contradict the laws of nature, as to live in society? And if he was intended to herd with his fellows, like geese and many other creatures, how could he so far pervert his destiny, as to lead, during many ages, the life of a solitary animal? He is capable of improvement, and hence he has been supposed to be perverted. But why ought we not rather to conclude that he has attained to that degree of perfection which nature has marked out for him?

All mankind live together in society: can we infer from this, that they did not live so formerly? Would not this be like concluding, that if bulls have horns at present, it is because they have not always had them?

Mankind in general have always been what they are: I do not mean that they have always had fine cities, four and twenty pounders, comic operas, and convents; but they have always had the same instinct which suggests a love of life, and leads them to delight in the companion of their pleasure, in their children, their grand-children, and the works of their hands.

This instinct is invariable from one end of the universe to the other. The foundation of society having therefore always existed, there has always been some kind of society; and this sufficiently proves that we were not designed to live in the manner of bears.

Children have sometimes been found wandering in woods, and living like brutes; and so have
sheep

sheep and geese, but this by no means proves that sheep and geese were not intended to live in flocks.

There are faquirs in India, who live in solitude, loaded with chains. Yes; and they live in this manner, with no other view, than to excite the admiration and charity of those who visit them. From a mixture of fanaticism and vanity, they act like our European beggars, who cripple themselves in order to excite compassion. These excrements of human society, serve only to prove how much that society may be abused.

It is very probable that men were rude and uncivilized, during thousands of centuries, as an infinite number of peasants are to this day. But mankind could never lead the life of badgers and bears. If it be asked by what law, by what secret ties, or in a word, by what instinct man was enabled to live in society, without the assistance of the arts, and even without having a language? I would reply, that this cause is to be sought for in his peculiar nature; and in the taste that induces him to cohabit with a woman; that it is from the attachment an Icelander, a Laplander, or an Hottentot feels for his companion, when her pregnancy gives him hopes of seeing a being produced, that is to resemble, and is a part of himself; from the reciprocal good offices which this man and this woman are enabled to perform for each other; from the affection with which nature inspires them for their little one, the moment it is born; from the habit they acquire of loving it; from the habit which this little one necessarily acquires of obeying his father and his mother; from the assistance he affords them, after he is five or six years old; from the other children

dren which this man and this woman beget; and in a word, from their seeing in their old age, their sons and daughters begetting other children, who have the same instinct as their fathers and mothers.

All this, I confess, forms but a rude groupe of the human species; and yet it is certain that the colliers in the forests of Germany, the inhabitants of the North, and an hundred petty nations in Africa live nearly in the manner I have just now described.

What language would those savage families speak? They would doubtless be a very long time without speaking any; they would easily understand one another by their cries and their gestures. All nations have been savages in this respect; that is to say, tribes of the human species were for a long time wandering in the woods, contending for their food with other animals, arming themselves against them with stones and the branches of trees, and feeding upon roots, and different kinds of fruit, and even upon animals.

There is in man a mechanical instinct, which we every day see producing very great effects, even in the most ignorant of mankind. The people who inhabit the mountains of Tyrol, have invented machines that astonish men of learning. The most ignorant peasant knows how to move the heaviest loads by means of a lever, without having any idea of the mechanical principle upon which the operation is effected. If it had been requisite for such a knowledge to have preceded the use of levers, what a number of ages would have elapsed before mankind would have been able to have removed a large stone from its place!

Ask a boy to leap over a ditch, and you will see him take a spring mechanically, by first going a little backward, and then running forward, and certainly he will do this without knowing that his strength in this case is the product of his bulk multiplied by his swiftness.

It is therefore indisputable, that nature alone inspires us with respect to morality. We have all of us two sentiments, which are the foundation of society, commiseration and justice. If a child sees one of his fellow creatures inhumanly treated, he will immediately express his concern by cries and tears, and if he can, will assist the sufferer.

Ask a child who is just beginning to reason and to speak, whether the corn that his neighbour has sown in his field, belongs to that neighbour, and whether the robber who has killed the proprietor of the field, has any just right to the crop; and you will find that this child will answer you as well as all the legislators upon earth would do.

God has given us a principle of universal reason, in the same manner as he has given feathers to birds, and a covering of fur to bears. And this principle is so invariable, that it subsists in spite of all the passions that oppose it, in spite of the tyrants who want to drown it in blood, and in spite of the impostors who endeavour to annihilate it in superstition. This is the reason why the most ignorant people never fail in time to form a proper judgment of the laws by which they are governed, because they perceive whether or not these laws are conformable to the principles of commiseration and justice that are engraven in their hearts.

But

But before mankind could form themselves into a numerous society or nation, it was necessary for them to have a language, and this was the most difficult of the two. Without the gift of imitation, they would never have attained to it. They without doubt began with certain cries, which expressed their first wants; after a time, they who were the most ingenious, and who were born with the most flexible organs, would form some few articulations which were repeated by their children. It is probable that every idiom was originally composed of monosyllables, as being the most easily pronounced and retained.

We find in fact, that the most ancient nations who have preserved any part of their primitive language, still make use of monosyllables to express the most familiar things. The Chinese is almost wholly composed of monosyllables.

If you consult the ancient Teutonic and all the idioms of the North, you will find hardly any of the common objects or necessities of life, that are expressed by more than one articulation. Every thing is monosyllable, as *zon*, the sun; *moun*, the moon; *ze*, the sea; *kof*, the head; *boum*, a tree; *shlaf*, to sleep; &c.

It was with this brevity that mankind expressed themselves in the forests of Gaul and Germany, and throughout the North; nor had the Greeks and Romans more compound words till long after they were united into a body of people.

But by what sagacity were mankind enabled to mark the difference of tenses? How came they to distinguish between the *I should like*, and the *I should have liked*, things positive and things conditional? It could be only amongst the more civilized nations, that men could in time possibly

bly be enabled to define, by compound words, these secret operations of the human mind. Hence it is that among the barbarians we find only two or three tenses. The Jews expressed only the present and the future; and after all, notwithstanding the efforts of mankind, there is no language that approaches to perfection.

Of A M E R I C A.

IS it possible that any one can be still asking whence the men came who peopled America? The same thing might certainly be asked concerning the Terra Australis*, which is much farther from the port that Columbus sailed from, than the Caribbee islands are. Men and animals have been found in every part of the habitable earth; and who placed them there? We have already said, that it is he who makes the grass to grow in the fields; so that we ought not to be any more surprized at finding men in America than flies.

It is pleasant enough to see the Jesuit Lafiteau, pretending in the preface to his *History of the American Savages*, that none but atheists can believe that God created the Americans.

We still see maps of the old world engraved, in which America appears under the name of the Atlantic island. In these maps the Cape de Verd islands are called the Gorgades, and the Caribbee islands the Hesperides. There is no other foundation for all this, than the ancient discovery of the Canary islands, and probably of that of Ma-

* See *The Essay on the Manners of Nations*, Vol. III. page 257.

deira, which were visited by the Phœnicians and Carthaginians; they are very near the continent of Africa, and were perhaps at a less distance from it in ancient days than they are at present.

Let father Lafiteau derive the Caribbees from Caria on account of the conformity between the two names, and above all because the Caribbæ women as well as those of Caria, dressed their husbands victuals; let him suppose that the Caribbees are born of a red, and the negroes of a black colour only because their first fathers were accustomed to paint themselves red or black.

Father Lafiteau tells us, that the negresses seeing their husbands painted black, were so affected by this circumstance, that their progeny have felt the effects of it ever since. The same thing, says he, happened to the Caribbee women, who from the same strength of imagination brought red children into the world. He quotes the example of Jacob's ewes, who brought forth lambs of a speckled colour, because the patriarch, "Took him rods of green poplar, and " of hasel and chesnut-tree; and peeled white " strakes in them, and made the white appear " which was in the rods. And he set these rods " before the flocks, and the flocks conceived, " and brought forth cattle ring-straked, speckled " and spotted*." But the Jesuit ought to know that many of the things that happened in Jacob's time, no longer happen in these days.

If Laban's son-in-law had been asked why his ewes, from having grass constantly before their eyes, did not bring forth green lambs, he would have been greatly embarrassed.

* Genesis, chap. xxx.

In short, Lafiteau derives the Americans from the ancient Greeks, and here are his reasons. The Greeks had fables, and so have the Americans. The primitive Greeks lived by hunting, and so do the Americans. The Greeks had their oracles, and the Americans have their forcerers. The Greeks danced in their religious ceremonies, and so do the Americans. These reasons are certainly very convincing.

We may make one reflection on the nations of the new world which father Lafiteau has not made ; and this is, that the people the most remote from the tropics preserved their liberty, while almost all those who dwelt nearer the tropics submitted themselves to monarchs. The same distinction prevailed for a long time in our continent. But we do not find that the people of Canada ever went to subdue Mexico, or resembled the Tartars who spread themselves over Asia and Europe. It would seem as if the Canadians were never sufficiently numerous to send colonies into other countries.

In general, America could never be so populous as Europe or Asia ; it is covered with immense swamps, which render the air exceedingly noxious ; the soil produces a prodigious number of poisons, and arrows dipt in the juices of these venomous plants never fail to prove fatal. Nature in short has given much less industry to the Americans, than to the inhabitants of the old world. All these causes together would greatly hinder population.

Amongst all the philosophical observations that may be made on this fourth part of our globe, perhaps the most singular is, that we find in it only one nation that have beards, and these are

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the Esquimaux, who inhabit towards the fifty-second degree of northern latitude, where the cold is much more intense than it is in the sixty-sixth degree of our continent. Their neighbours are beardless. Here then are two races of men absolutely different the one from the other.

Towards the isthmus of Panama are the Darrians who in many respects resemble the Albinos. These people who avoid the light, and vegetate in caverns, are a feeble race, and consequently in very small number.

The lions of America are mean and cowardly ; the sheep are large, and so strong that they serve to carry burdens. All the rivers of America are at least ten times wider than ours. In a word, the natural productions of the earth, are all of them different from those of our hemisphere. Thus the same Providence that has created the elephant, the rhinoceros, and negroes, has in another part of the globe, produced hogs that have their navel upon their backs, and men who are essentially different from us.

Of THEOCRACY.

IT is probable, that most of the ancient nations were governed by a kind of theocracy. If you begin with India, you will find that the Brachmans were for a long time the sovereigns of that country. You will find likewise that the Magi had the highest authority in Persia. The history of the ears of Smerdis is probably fabulous ; but at any-rate it proves, that one of the magi was seated on the throne of Cyrus. Many of the Egyptian priests directed the kings of that country even in the articles of eating and drinking,
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had the care of their education, judged them after their death, and often ascended the throne themselves.

If we descend to the Greeks, we shall find their history, fabulous as it is, informing us that the prophet Calchas had influence enough over the army, to sacrifice the daughter of the king of kings.

If we come lower down to the savage nations, posterior to the Greeks, we shall see the Druids governing the Gauls.

It does not seem to have been possible for the primitive nations to have had any other than a theocratical government; for as soon as any people had chosen a tutelary god, that god would have priests. Those priests would govern the minds of the nation, and they could do this only in the name of their god; they would therefore make him speak, they would deliver his oracles, and every thing would be executed by the express order of the deity.

From this source were derived those sacrifices of human blood, that have defiled almost the whole earth. What father or mother would ever have been able so far to abjure nature, as to deliver their son or their daughter into the hands of a priest, to be put to death upon an altar, if they had not been certain that the god of the country had ordered this sacrifice?

Theocracy not only reigned for a long time, but it carried tyranny to the most horrid excess that human madness is capable of attaining; and the more this government stiled itself divine, the more abominable it was.

Almost all nations have sacrificed children to their gods; and they doubtless were of opinion that

that these unnatural sacrifices were required by the deities they worshipped.

Among the different nations that have been improperly stiled civilized, I can find hardly any except the Chinese, who did not adopt these horrid and absurd practices. China is the only ancient state we are acquainted with, that has never been subject to the priesthood; for the Japanese were governed by a priest six hundred years before our æra. In almost every other country, theocracy was so firmly established, so deeply rooted, that all the earliest histories are those of the gods themselves, who became incarnate in order to govern mankind. Thus the people of Thebes and Memphis believed that the gods reigned twelve thousand years in Egypt. Brama assumed the human form to reign in India, as Sammonocodom did in Siam. The god Adad governed Syria, as the goddess Cybele did Phrygia; Jupiter reigned in Crete, and Saturn in Greece and Italy. The same idea prevails in all these fables; all mankind having had a confused notion, that the gods formerly resided upon earth.

Of the CHALDÆANS.

THE Chaldæans, the Indians, and the Chinese, seem to me to be the nations that were the first civilized. We have an indisputable proof of the science of the Chaldæans, in the nineteen hundred and three years celestial observations that were sent by Calisthenes from Babylon, to the preceptor of Alexander. These astronomical tables ascend exactly to the year 2234 before our vulgar æra. It is true that this epoch is very near the period at which the Vulgate edition of the Bible places the

the deluge. But we are not disposed at present to enter into the depths of the different chronologies of the Vulgate, the Samaritans, and the Septuagint, all of which we equally reverence. The universal deluge is a great miracle, which is perfectly foreign to our present inquiries. We are here reasoning only from natural notions, submitting however, the feeble researches of our confined understanding, to the more enlightened genius of a superior order.

Several ancient authors quoted by George le Sincelle, say, that in the reign of a Chaldæan king named Xixoutrou, there was a terrible inundation. Probably the Tigris and the Euphrates overflowed their banks more than ordinary. But the Chaldæans could not possibly have known by any other means than revelation, that the whole habitable earth was covered with water. Once more I must observe, that I am here considering only the ordinary course of nature.

It is clear, that if the Chaldæans had existed in the world only nineteen hundred years before our æra, this short space would not have been sufficient for them to have ascertained the true system of our universe; an astonishing discovery, to which it is certain the Chaldæans had attained. Aristarchus of Samos informs us, that the sages of Chaldæa had convinced themselves, how impossible it was that the earth should occupy the centre of the planetary world; that they assigned to the sun its proper place in the system, and that they considered the earth and the other planets as revolving round it, each in a different orbit.

The progress of the human understanding is so slow, the illusion of the senses is so powerful, and
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the subjection to received notions is so arbitrary, that a people who had existed only nineteen hundred years, could not possibly in that time have acquired a degree of philosophy which undeceives the eyes, and requires the most profound theory. And indeed, we find that the Chaldæans reckoned four hundred and seventy thousand years; yet after all, this knowledge of the true system was confined to a small number of their philosophers. This is the fate of all great truths; and the Greeks who came after them, adopted only the common system which is altogether puerile.

Four hundred and seventy thousand years *, is indeed a long period for us, who are as it were

* Our holy religion, which in every respect is so superior to our understanding, informs us that the world was created only about six thousand years ago, according to the Vulgate edition of the Bible, or about seven thousand years ago according to the Septuagint. The interpreters of this ineffable religion teach us, that Adam had knowledge by inspiration, and that all the arts were perpetuated from Adam to Noah. If this is really the opinion of the church, we adopt it with a firm and invariable faith, submitting at the same time every thing we write, to the judgment of this same holy church, which is certainly infallible. It is to no purpose that the emperor Julian, who was otherwise so respectable for his virtue, his courage, and his learning, says in a discourse, which has been so much censured by the great and moderate St. Cyril, that whether Adam had knowledge by inspiration or not, God could not command him not to eat of the tree of knowledge, of good and evil, but on the contrary, would order him to eat freely of the fruit of that tree, in order to increase his inspired knowledge, if he had any, or to acquire it if he had it not. It is well known with what sagacity St. Cyril has refuted this argument. We think it right however once more to assure the reader, that we do not mean to interfere in any respect with things

but of yesterday; but it is but a mere trifle for the whole universe. I am aware that we cannot adopt this calculation, that Cicero laughed at it, that it is exorbitant, and what is more, that we ought to believe the Pentateuch, rather than Sanchoniathon and Berosus. But once more I must repeat it, it is impossible (humanly speaking) that men could have arrived at such wonderful truths, in nineteen hundred years. The first art among mankind was, certainly, that of providing for their subsistence, and this, in the beginning, was a matter of much greater difficulty to them, than to brutes. The second would be to form a language; and this assuredly, required a very considerable space of time. The third would be to build themselves a few huts; and the fourth to clothe themselves. After these, the forging of iron, or supplying the want of it, required such a concurrence of fortunate circumstance, so much industry, and such a number of ages, that it is hardly possible for us to imagine how mankind contrived to bring them about. And yet after all, what an immense distance there was between these discoveries and that of astronomy!

The Chaldæans for a long time engraved their observations and laws upon brick, in hieroglyphics, which were speaking characters; and this method was followed by the Egyptians several centuries afterwards. The act of transmitting their ideas by alphabetical characters, must have been a very late invention in that part of Asia.

things sacred. We protest against all the false constructions and ill-natured inductions that may be attempted to be drawn from what we have said. V.

It is probable that the Chaldæans began to make use of the alphabet at the time of their first building towns. The reader perhaps will ask how they managed before this? In the same manner as they do in my village, and in an hundred thousand other villages in the world, where nobody knows either how to read or to write, and yet they understand one another perfectly well, and cultivate the necessary arts.

Babylon was probably a very ancient village before it was made a superb and immense city. But who built this city? I know not. Was it Semiramis? Was it Belus? Was it Nabonassar? There never was in Asia, either a woman of the name of Semiramis, or a man named Belus. It is just the same as if we were to give the names of Armagnac and Abbeville to Greek towns. The Greeks, who changed all the barbarous terminations into Greek words, corrupted all the Asiatic names. Besides, the history of Semiramis resembles the oriental tales.

Nabonassar, or rather Nabon-assor, was probably he who embellished and fortified Babylon, and at length made it a superb city. This was certainly the name of a real monarch, who is known in Asia by the æra which bears his name, and which begins only 747 years before ours; so that it is modern in comparison of the number of centuries that are necessary to arrive at the establishment of extensive dominions. The very name of Babylon proves that it existed long before the time of Nabonassar. It signifies the town of father *Bel*. *Bab* in Chaldæan, signifies *father*, according to Herbelot, and *Bel* is the name of the Lord. The orientals never gave it any other name than *Babel*, which means the *city of the Lord*,
the

the *city of God*, or according to others, the *gate of God*.

As there was no Belus, founder of Babylon, so there was no Ninus, founder of Ninvah, which we call Niniveh. No Asiatic prince ever bore a name in *us*.

It is possible that Babylon might be four and twenty of our leagues in circumference; but that Ninus built a city called Niniveh, upon the Tigris, at the distance only of forty leagues from Babylon, and as large as that city, is what by no means appears credible. We are told of three potent empires which subsisted at the same time, that of Babylon, that of Assyria or Niniveh, and that of Syria or Damascus. The thing is hardly probable; it is as if we were to say, there were three potent empires at the same time in a part of Gaul, the capitals of which, Paris, Soissons and Orleans, were each twenty-four leagues in circumference. Besides, Niniveh was not built, or at least was but a very inconsiderable place at the time the prophet Jonas is said to have been deputed to it, in order to exhort it to repentance, but in his way thither, was swallowed up by a fish, that kept him three days and three nights in its belly.

The pretended empire of Assyria did not even exist at the time Jonas is said to have lived; since, we are told, that he prophesied under the Melk, or petty Jewish king, Joas; and Phul, who is spoken of in the Hebrew books, as the first king of Assyria did not begin to reign, according to them, till about fifty-two years after the death of Jonas. In this manner, by comparing dates, we every where met with contradiction, and remain in uncertainty.

It is asserted in the book of Jonas, that Niniveh contained an hundred and twenty thousand new born children; this would suppose upwards of five millions of inhabitants, according to the most exact calculations that have been founded on the number of children born in any given place, in the same year. Now, five millions of inhabitants, in a town that was not yet built, are rather an extraordinary circumstance.

I confess I understand nothing about the two empires of Babylon and Assyria. Several learned writers, who have endeavoured to throw some light upon this dark subject, have affirmed, that Assyria and Chaldæa were one and the same empire, governed sometimes by two princes, one of whom resided at Babylon, and the other at Niniveh. This rational opinion may be adopted, till such time as we find one that is still more rational.

What contributes to throw a new degree of probability on the antiquity of this nation, is the famous tower they erected, in order to observe the stars. Almost all the commentators being unable to deny the existence of this monument, think themselves obliged to suppose that it was nothing more than the remains of the Tower of Babel, which mankind wanted to raise even to heaven. We do not very well understand what the commentators mean by heaven; is it the moon? Is it the planet Venus? It is a long way to either of these.

Be it as it will, if Nabonassar erected this edifice by way of observatory, we must at least acknowledge that the Chaldæans had an observatory two thousand four hundred years before us. Think after this, how many centuries the slowness of the human understanding must have

have required, before it could arrive at the design of erecting such a monument to the sciences.

It was in Chaldæa, and not in Egypt that they invented the Zodiac. There seem to be three pretty strong proofs of this; the first is, that the Chaldæans were an enlightened nation before Egypt, on account of the inundations from the Nile, could be habitable; the second, that the signs of the Zodiac are suited to the climate of Mesopotamia, and not to that of Egypt. The Egyptians could not have the sign Taurus in the month of April, because they do not plough in that season; nor could they in the month of August describe a sign by a girl loaded with ears of corn, because their harvest did not happen at that time. They could not represent February by a pitcher of water, because it very seldom rains in Egypt, and never in the month of February. The third reason is, that the signs of the Chaldæan zodiac were one of the articles of their religion. They were under the government of twelve secondary gods, each of whom presided over one of these constellations, as we are told by Diodorus Siculus, in his second book. This religion of the ancient Chaldæans was Sabæism, that is to say, the adoration of one supreme God, and the veneration of the stars and of the celestial powers that presided over those stars. When they prayed, they turned towards the North star; so much was their worship connected with astronomy.

Vitruvius, in his ninth book, where he treats of sun-dials, the heights of the sun, the length of shadows, and the reflected light of the moon, constantly quotes the Chaldæans and not the Egyptians. This is a striking proof that Chaldæa

dæa and not Egypt was considered as the country that first invented this science; so that there is great truth in the old Latin proverb, *tradidit Ægyptis Babylon Ægyptus Achivis*, i. e. Babylon first taught the Egyptians, and Egypt the Greeks.

Of the Babylonians become Persians.

TO the eastward of Babylon were the Persians. These carried their arms and their religion to Babylon, when *Koresb*, whom we call Cyrus, took that city, with the assistance of the Medes, who were established to the northward of Persia. We have two principal fables concerning Cyrus, one by Herodotus, and the other by Xenophon, who both contradict one another in every thing, and who have both been indiscriminately copied by a thousand writers.

Herodotus supposes a Medean king, that is to say, a king of Hyrcania, whom he calls Astyages, which is a Greek name. This Hyrcanian, Astyages, gives orders for his grandson Cyrus to be drowned, because in a dream he had seen his daughter Mandane, the mother of Cyrus, *pissing so copiously, that she overflowed all Asia*. The rest of the adventure is nearly in the same taste; it is a history of Gargantua, written seriously.

Xenophon makes the life of Cyrus a moral romance, nearly similar to our Telemachus. In order to impress his readers with an idea of the manly education of his hero, he begins with supposing that the Medes were a voluptuous people sunk in effeminacy. But is it possible that the inhabitants of Hyrcania, whose country had been ravaged for more than thirty years, by the Tartars, at that time called Scythians, were Sybarites?

All

All that we can say with certainty concerning Cyrus, is, that he was a great conqueror, and of course, a great evil to mankind. The main circumstance of his history is true, but the episodes are false; as is the case with almost every history.

Rome existed at the time of Cyrus: she had a territory of four or five leagues in circumference, and plundered her neighbours as much as she could; but I would not warrant the combat of the three Horatii, the adventure of Lucretia, the descent of the bucklers from heaven, or the stone cut in two with a razor. There were some Jews who were slaves in Babylon and elsewhere; but humanly speaking, we might doubt whether the angel Raphael came down from heaven to accompany young Tobias on foot to Media, in order to procure him the payment of some money, and to drive away the devil Asmodeus, by burning the liver of a fish.

It is by no means my intention in this place to examine either the romance of Herodotus, or the romance of Xenophon, concerning the life and death of Cyrus. I shall only remark that the Parfis or Persians pretended to have had amongst them, six thousand years before, a certain Zoroaster, a prophet, who had taught them to be just and to worship the sun, in the same manner as the Chaldæans had worshipped the stars.

I do not mean to affirm that these Persians and Chaldæans were really so virtuous as they are represented to us; nor shall I attempt to ascertain the exact period at which their second Zoroaster made his appearance, who rectified the worship of the sun, and taught them to adore one only God, the creator of the sun and of the stars. We are told that he wrote or commented on the book Zend, which the Parfis who are dis-

persed

perfed at this day in Asia, revere as their bible. The Zend *, if we except the Chinese book of the five *kings*, is perhaps the moft ancient book in the world. It is written in the ancient facred language of the Chaldæans, and Dr. Hyde, who has given us a tranflation of the *Sadder*, would likewise have favoured us with that of the Zend, if he could have defrayed the expences of the work. I fhall therefore refer to the *Sadder*, which is an extract from the Zend, and the catechifm of the Parfis. It fhews that thofe people had long believed in a God, a devil, a refurrection, a paradife, and a hell. They were without difpute the firft who eftablifhed thofe ideas; it is the moft ancient fyftem we are acquainted with, and was not adopted by other nations, till after many centuries. The Pharifees among the Jews did not openly maintain the immortality of the foul, and the doctrine of rewards and punifhments after death, till about the time of Herod.

This is perhaps one of the moft important circumftances in the ancient hiftory of the world. We here fee an ufeful religion, founded on the doctrine of the immortality of the foul, and on the knowledge of the Creator. An immense number of years muft have elapfed, before the human mind could be enabled to conceive fuch a fyftem. We may remark likewise, that baptifm, or immerfion in water, in order to purify the foul, constitutes one of the precepts of the Zend. Perhaps all our religious ceremonies in the weft had their fource from the Perfians and Chaldæans.

I do not mean to inquire here how it happened, that the Babylonians had fecondary divinities,

* See Chap. V. of the following Effay.

although

although they acknowledged a supreme God. This system, or rather chaos, was common to all nations except the tribunals of China: In the laws, religions, and customs of almost every country, we find a great degree of folly combined with a little wisdom. Mankind are more guided by instinct than reason. The divinity is adored and dishonoured in every country. The Persians no sooner had sculptors among them than they worshipped images; the ruins of Persepolis abound with their statues; but in many of those figures we may observe the symbols of immortality; we see heads flying towards heaven with wings, which are emblematical of our removal from this transitory life to life immortal.

But let us pass on to customs that are altogether human. I am surprized that Herodotus should have asserted in the face of all Greece, in his first book, that all the Babylonian women were obliged to prostitute themselves, once in their lives, to strangers, in the temple of *Milita* or *Venus*. I am still more surprized, that this idle tale should continue to be repeated in all the histories that are compiled for the instruction of our youth. It must certainly have been a fine festival and a fine devotion, to see all the dealers in camels, horses, bullocks and asses, running into a church in order to enjoy the principal ladies of the city before the altar. But to be serious, is such infamy consistent with the character of a polished people? Is it possible that the magistrates of one of the largest cities in the world, could establish or tolerate such a custom? That husbands could consent to the prostitution of their wives? that fathers could thus deliver up their daughters to be polluted by the horse
L 1 dealers

dealers of Asia? That which is not in nature is never true. I would as soon believe Dion Cassius, when he tells us, that the grave senators of Rome proposed a decree, by which Cæsar, who was fifty-seven years old, was to be entitled to enjoy all the women he should desire.

The modern compilers of ancient history, who copy so many authors without examining any, ought to have taken notice that Herodotus dealt only in fables, or rather that his text was corrupted, and that he meant only to speak of the courtesans, who were to be found in all great cities, and who even accosted travellers upon the road.

I am as little disposed to believe Sextus Empiricus, who pretends that sodomy was ordained among the Persians. But is it possible to imagine that mankind would make a law, which if enforced, would have prevented the propagation of the human species? On the contrary, sodomy was expressly forbidden by the Zend, as may be seen in the abridgment of the Sadder, in which it is said *that there is no greater sin.*

Strabo says, that the Persians married their mothers; but what proofs does he bring of this? They consist merely of hearsays and vague reports. This perhaps furnished Catullus with the subject of his epigram, *Non magus ex matre & nato nascatur oportet.* Such a law however is by no means credible, and an epigram can never be admitted as a proof. Supposing however, that such a custom had been established, and that there had been no women to be found, who were willing to lie with their sons, there would then have been no priests in Persia. But as the religion of the magi enjoined them to promote population, they would

would rather have encouraged fathers to lie with their daughters, than mothers with their sons, because an old man may beget children, whereas an old woman is incapable of being impregnated.

In a word, in reading history, let us be upon our guard against fables of every kind.

Of S Y R I A.

I AM convinced by all the works that have been handed down to us, that the country which extends from Alexandria or Scanderoon, as far as Bagdat, went always by the name of Syria; that the alphabet of those people was Syriac, and that the ancient cities of Zobah, Balbec and Damascus, and likewise Antioch, Seleucia and Palmyra were situated in that country. Balk was so ancient, that the Persians pretended that their *Bram* or *Abraham* came from Balk to them. Where then could be that powerful empire of Assyria of which so much has been said, unless it was in the country of fables?

The Gauls sometimes extended as far as the Rhine, and sometimes were confined within narrower limits; but who ever took it into his head to place a vast empire between the Rhine and the Gauls? Or, imagined that nations bordering on the Euphrates were called Assyrians, when they extended themselves towards Damascus, or that the Syrians changed their name for that of Assyrians, when they had reached the Euphrates? And yet the whole difficulty is reducible to this. All neighbouring nations have been intermixed, have been at war with one another and have changed their boundaries. But when once capital

cities are established, these cities soon give rise to a striking difference between the two nations. Thus the Babylonians whether conquerors or conquered, were always different from the people of Syria. The ancient characters of the Syriac language were not the same as those of the ancient Chaldæans.

Their religions, superstitions, laws and customs were all of them different. The goddess of the Syrians had no relation to the religious worship of the Chaldæans. The Chaldæan, Babylonian, and Persian magi never made themselves eunuchs like the priests of the goddess of Syria. Strange as it may seem, the Syrians worshipped the figure of what we call *Priapus*, and the priests deprived themselves of their virility. This seems to be a proof that the nation was of great antiquity, and the number of people considerable, since it is hardly to be imagined, that nature would have been thus despoiled in a country where the human species was rare.

The priests of Cybele in Phrygia made themselves eunuchs like those of Syria. This seems to have been an effect of the ancient custom adopted by mankind, of sacrificing to the gods whatever they held most dear, and of not exposing themselves in the presence of pure beings, to accidents which they considered as partaking of impurity. After such sacrifices, can we be surprised at that which several nations have made of their foreskins, or at the custom which prevails in certain parts of Africa of cutting out one of their testicles. The accounts we have of Atis and Comababus are only fables, like that of Jupiter who made his father Saturn an eunuch. Superstition
invents

invents ridiculous customs, and a romantic imagination invents absurd reasons for them.

I have another remark to make on the ancient Syrians, and this is, that the city which was afterwards called the *holy city*, and *Hierapolis* by the Greeks, was by the Syrians named *Magog*. This word *Mag* has a great affinity to the ancient magi, and seems to have been common to all those who devoted themselves to the service of the Deity. Each nation had its holy city. We know that Thebes in Egypt was the city of God, that Babylon was the city of God, and that Apamia in Phrygia was likewise the city of God.

Long after the period we are alluding to, we find the Jews speaking of the people of Gog and Magog; they might mean by these names, the nations bordering on the Euphrates and the Orontes; or they might mean the Scythians, who spread themselves over Asia before the time of Cyrus, and laid waste Phœnicia. But it is of very little importance to know, what ideas a Jew had when he pronounced Gog or Magog.

Upon the whole, I have no doubt that the Syrians were much more ancient than the Egyptians, and the reason of this is evident, those countries which are the most easily cultivated, being necessarily the first peopled and the first that become flourishing.

Of the Phœnicians, and of Sanchoniathon.

The Phœnicians were probably formed into a body of people as early as any of the other inhabitants of Syria. They were perhaps not quite so ancient as the Chaldæans, because their country was less fertile. Sidon, Tyre, Joppah,

Berith

Berith and Ascalon are barren spots. Maritime commerce has always been the last resource of mankind. They began with cultivating their lands, before they thought of building ships to go in quest of new countries beyond the seas. But they who devoted themselves to navigation soon acquired an industry unknown to other nations. We read of no maritime enterprise either of the Chaldæans or Indians. Even the Egyptians held the sea in horror. It was their *Typhon*, their evil spirit; and this gives rise to a doubt concerning the four hundred ships, that are said to have been fitted out by Sesostris in his expedition against India. But the enterprises of the Phœnicians are real. They founded Carthage and Cadiz, they discovered England, they traded to India by Eziongaber, they manufactured precious stuffs and possessed the art of dying in purple; all these are so many proofs of their industry, and this industry constituted their grandeur.

The Phœnicians were in ancient times, what the Venetians were in the fifteenth century, and what the Dutch are at present; a people who enriched themselves by trade.

Their commerce necessarily required the use of registers, to answer the same purposes as our account books; and such registers could not be kept without certain easy and durable signs or characters. It therefore seems very probable, that the Phœnicians were the inventors of alphabetical writing. I would not venture to assert, that they were before hand with the Chaldæans in the use of such characters, but their alphabet was certainly more complete and more useful, since they distinguished the vowels which the Chaldæans did not express. Even the word *alphabet*,

phabeth, which is composed of their two first characters, is a proof in favour of the Phœnicians.

I do not find that the Egyptians ever communicated their letters, or their language to any people; on the contrary, the Phœnicians transmitted their language and alphabet to the Carthaginians who afterwards altered them; and their letters were adopted by the Greeks.

Sanchoniathon, a Phœnician, who, long before the Trojan war, wrote an history of the primitive ages, some few fragments of which have been preserved by Eusebius and translated by Philo of Byblos; Sanchoniathon, I say, informs us, that the Phœnicians had from time immemorial sacrificed to the elements and the winds, a custom which indeed seems suitable to a commercial people. Like all the earlier writers he was desirous of carrying his history back to the origin of things; he had the same ambition as the authors of the Zend and Vedam, the same that Manethon had in Egypt, and Hesiod in Greece.

What proves the prodigious antiquity of Sanchoniathon's book is, that some passages of it used to be read in the mysteries of Isis and Ceres, an homage which neither the Egyptians nor the Greeks, would have paid to a foreign author, if his work had not been considered as one of the first sources of human knowledge.

Sanchoniathon wrote nothing without consulting all the ancient archives, and above all the priest Jerombal. The name of Sanchoniathon in ancient Phœnician signifies *lover of truth*. Porphyrius, Theodoret, and Eusebius acknowledge this. Phœnicia was called *Kirjath-Sepher*, or the country

country of archives. When the Jews came to establish themselves in a part of that country, they acknowledged the propriety of this appellation, as may be seen in the books of Joshua and Judges.

Jerombal, who was consulted by Sanchoniathon, was the priest of the supreme God, whom the Phœnicians called *Jabo*, *Jekovah*, a name adopted by the Egyptians, and afterwards by the Jews. The fragments of Sanchoniathon's work, prove that Tyre had long existed, although it was not as yet become a powerful city.

The word *El*, which signified God among the ancient Phœnicians, has some affinity to the *Alla* of the Arabians; and it is probable, that from this monosyllable *El*, the Greeks composed their *Elios*. But what is very remarkable, is, that we find among the ancient Phœnicians, the word *Eloa*, *Eloim*, which the Hebrews adopted afterwards, when they established themselves in Canaan.

It was from Phœnicia, that the Jews took all the names they gave to the Deity, as *Eloa*, *Jabo*, *Adonai*; nor could it be otherwise, since the Jews for a long time spoke no other language in Canaan, than that of the Phœnicians.

The word *Jabo*, which was held so sacred among the Jews, that they never ventured to utter it, was so common in the East, that Diodorus in his second book, speaking of those who pretended to have discoursed with the gods, says, that *Minos* boasted of his having conversed with the god *Zeus*; *Zamolxis* with the goddess *Vesta*, and the Jew *Moses* with the god *Jabo*, &c.

It is particularly observable, that Sanchoniathon, in describing the ancient cosmology of his country,

country, speaks of a *chautereb*, or chaos involved in darkness. The word *erebus*, which Hesiod and the rest of the Greeks after his time made use of to signify night, was taken from the Phœnician word just now mentioned. Out of chaos arose *muth* or *moth*, which signifies matter. Who arranged this matter? *Colpi Jabo*, the spirit of God, or rather the mouth of God, the voice of God. At the voice of God, men and animals were created.

We may easily be convinced that this cosmography is the original from which all others have been copied. The most ancient nations are always imitated by those who follow after them; they learn their language, they adopt a part of their religious ceremonies, and likewise their antiquities and fables. I am aware, that the origins of the Chaldæans, Syrians, Phœnicians, Egyptians and Greeks, are all of them very obscure. But where is the origin that is not so? We can know nothing with certainty, concerning the formation of the world, except what the Creator himself has deigned to inform us. We advance with certainty as far as certain limits. We know that Babylon existed before Rome; that the cities of Syria were powerful before Jerusalem was even known, and that there were kings in Egypt before the times of Abraham or Jacob; we likewise know what nations were the last formed; but to say precisely who were the first people, requires a revelation.

At any rate however, we may be allowed to weigh probabilities, and to make use of our reason, in matters which do not interfere with those sacred dogmas that are superior to all reason.

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It is very certain that the Phœnicians had long been in possession of their country, at the time the Hebrews first made their appearance there. And is it possible that the Jews could learn the Phœnician language, while they were wandering in the desert at a distance from Phœnicia, and amidst the tribes of Arabia?

Could the Phœnician become the common language of the Jews? And could they write in that language at the time of Joshua, amidst continual wars and massacres? Did not the Jews after the death of Joshua, when they were reduced to slavery in that very country which they had laid waste with fire and sword, did they not, I say, then learn a little of the language of their masters, in the same manner as they afterwards learnt a little Chaldæan when they were slaves at Babylon?

Is it not extremely probable that a commercial, industrious and learned people, who were established time immemorial, and who are considered as the inventors of letters, would be able to write long before a wandering people, newly settled in their neighbourhood, without either learning, industry, or commerce, and subsisting entirely by rapine?

Can any one seriously deny the authenticity of the fragments of Sanchoniathon, that are preserved by Eusebius? Or can we suppose with the learned Huet, that Sanchoniathon derived his materials from Moses? Although the most ancient monuments seem to prove that Sanchoniathon lived nearly at the time of Moses, yet we will not determine any thing on this subject; we leave it to the enlightened and judicious reader, to decide betwixt Huet and Vandale, who has

refuted him. We are in search, not of controversy, but truth.

Of the Scythians and Gomerites.

I SHALL take no notice of Gomer, who at coming out of the ark, is said to have subdued the Gauls, and to have peopled them in a few years. Nor shall I say any thing of Tubal, who did the same thing in Spain; or of Magog, who was employed in like manner in the northern parts of Germany, while the sons of Ham were getting black children towards Guinea and Congo. These disgustful impertinencies are to be met with in so many books, that it would be idle to repeat them. Even children begin to smile at them. But from what weakness, or secret malignity, or rather from what affectation of displaying a misplaced eloquence, have so many historians extolled the Scythians, a people with whom they were unacquainted?

Why does Quintus Curtius, speaking of the Scythians who inhabited to the north of Sogdiana, beyond the Oxus, (which he mistakes for the Tanais, tho' they are five hundred leagues apart) why, I say, does Quintus Curtius put a philosophical harangue into the mouths of those barbarians? Why does he suppose them to reproach Alexander with his thirst for conquest? Why does he make them say that Alexander was the most famous robber in the world, although they themselves had long before his time, plundered every part of Asia? In a word, why does Quintus Curtius describe those Scythians as the most upright men upon earth? The reason is, that as he shews his ignorance of geography, by

placing the Tanais in the neighbourhood of the Caspian Sea, so he appears equally ignorant of the manners of the Scythians, when he speaks of the probity of those people.

It is true, that Horace contrasting the manners of the Scythians with those of the Romans, gives us the panegyric of those barbarians in the following lines,

*Campestres melius Scythæ
(Quorum plaustra vagas rite trahunt domos)
Vivunt, et rigidi Getæ.*

Lib. III. Carm. 24 *.

but then Horace speaks as a poet, who meant to be satyrical, and who was glad to extol foreigners at the expence of his countrymen.

It is for the same reason that Tacitus is so lavish of his praises on the barbarous Germans, who pillaged Gaul, and sacrificed men to their abominable gods. Tacitus, Quintus Curtius, and Horace, are in this respect like those pedagogues, who, in order to excite emulation in their scholars, are constantly extolling the application and abilities of other children, however illiterate they may be.

The Scythians are the same barbarians whom we have since called Tartars. They had repeatedly ravaged Asia, long before the time of Alexander, and have at different times over-run the greatest part of the continent. At one time under the name of Monguls or Huns, they subdued China and India; at another time under the name

* Happy the Scythians, houseless train!
Who roll their vagrant dwellings o'er the plain;
Happy the Getes fierce and brave—— FRANCIS.

of Turks, they got the better of the Arabians, who had conquered part of Asia. It was from those vast countries that the Huns issued, who spread themselves as far as Rome. These were the just and disinterested people, whose equity is still extolled by our compilers, when they copy Quintus Curtius. Thus it is that we are overwhelmed with ancient histories, written without taste or judgment; the persons who read them, have in general as little understanding as the authors, so that all they do is to fill their heads with errors.

The Russians are the present inhabitants of the ancient European Scythia; these are the people who have furnished history with truths that are very astonishing. The world has indeed produced many revolutions more striking to the imagination, but none that are so satisfactory, or that reflect so much honour on the human understanding. We have seen conquerors, and we have seen devastations; but that a single man should in the space only of twenty years, change the manners, the laws and the genius of the most extensive empire upon earth, and that the polite arts should be at once brought to embellish his deserts, is what is truly admirable. A woman who could neither write nor read, perfected what Peter the Great had begun; and another woman (Elizabeth) extended still farther, those noble beginnings. A third, who is the present empress, has gone much farther than either of the two others; her genius has communicated itself to her subjects; the revolutions of the palace have not retarded for a single instant, the progress of the empire towards improvement, and in a word, in the short space of half a century, we have seen the
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court of Scythia become more enlightened than either Greece or Rome ever were.

Of A R A B I A.

IF the reader is curious after monuments like those of Egypt, I don't think he ought to look for them in Arabia. We are told that Mecca was built about the time of Abraham; but it is situated on so sandy and barren a spot, that there can be no probability of its having been built before those cities that were founded on the banks of rivers, in more fertile countries.

The greater part of Arabia is a vast desert consisting of sands and rocks. Arabia Felix has deserved to be so called, because, being surrounded by deserts and a strong sea; she was secure from the rapacity of those plunderers called conquerors, till the time of Mahomet, and then she became the companion of his victories. The advantages she derived from her situation were therefore far above what she owed to her spices, her frankincense, her cinnamon, which is not the best in the world, or even to her coffee, which at present constitutes her chief riches.

Arabia Deserta, is that miserable country which was formerly inhabited by a few Amalekites, Moabites and Midianites, and which at present does not contain more than nine or ten thousand Arabians; who are robbers and wanderers, nor could it possibly maintain a greater number. We are told that two millions of Jews passed forty years in these deserts. This is not the true Arabia, and this country is often called the desert of Syria.

Arabia

Arabia Petræa is so called, from *Petra*, a small fortress, which certainly had not that name given to it by the Arabians, but by the Greeks, about the time of Alexander. This Arabia Petræa, is very small, and very often confounded with Arabia Deserta. Both the one and the other have always been inhabited by wandering tribes.

As for that part of it which is called *Felix*, or *the happy*, almost one half of it consists of deserts, but when we advance a few miles to the eastward either of Mocho or Mecca, we then find it the most agreeable country upon earth. It seems to enjoy perpetual spring, and the air is perfumed with the odour of aromatic plants, which nature there produces spontaneously. A thousand rivulets issue from the mountains, which refresh the atmosphere, and temperate the heat of the sun under shades that enjoy perpetual verdure.

It is in those countries more especially, that the word *paradise* or *garden* signifies heaven.

The gardens of Saana towards Aden, were more famous among the Arabians, than those of Alcinous were afterwards among the Greeks. This *Aden* or *Eden*, was called the garden of delight. They still speak of an ancient *Shedad*, the gardens of which were not less famous. In those burning climates, the great felicity was shade.

This vast country of Arabia Felix is so beautiful, and its harbours are so happily situated towards the Indian ocean, that we are told that Alexander was desirous of conquering it, in order to make it the seat of his empire, and the centre of commerce. He would have kept up the ancient canal made by the king of Egypt, which joined the Nile to the Red Sea, and thus all the treasures

treasures of India would have been conveyed from Aden or Eden to Alexandria. Such an enterprize is not to be put on a footing with the many insipid and absurd fables which disgrace ancient history. He indeed could not possibly have accomplished it, till he had subdued all Arabia; but if any one could have done this, it was Alexander. It seems however that those people did not fear him, since they did not even send deputies to him, at the time he held Egypt and Persia under his yoke.

The Arabians defended by their deserts and their courage, have always escaped a foreign yoke. Trajan conquered only a small part of Arabia Petræa. Even to this day, they defy the Ottoman power. This great people have always been as free as the Scythians, and more civilized.

We must take care not to confound these Arabians with the hordes who stile themselves the descendants of Ismael. The Ismaelites, or those who called themselves the children of Keturah, were strangers who never gained footing in Arabia Felix. Their tribes wandered in Arabia Petræa, towards the country of Midian, and were afterwards intermixed with the genuine Arabians at the time of Mahomet, when they embraced his religion.

The people of Arabia, properly so called, were those who were truly indigenous, or, in other words, those who from time immemorial had inhabited that fine country, without intermixing with any other nation, and without ever having been conquered, or conquerors. Their religion was the most natural and the most simple of any. It consisted in the worship of one God, and in displaying their veneration for the stars, which in
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so serene a climate, seemed to announce the magnificence of the Deity, more than any other part of nature. They considered the planets as mediators between God and mankind. They continued to have this religion till the time of Mahomet. I can easily conceive that they had superstitions amongst them, because they were men; but separated as they were from the rest of the world, by seas and deserts, possessing a delicious country, and finding themselves without wants or fears, they must naturally have been less wicked and less superstitious than other nations.

They had never been known to invade the territories of their neighbours, like beasts of prey, to make the orders of the Deity a pretext for oppressing or destroying the feeble, or to make their court to the powerful, by flattering them by false oracles. Their superstitions were neither absurd nor barbarous.

They are not spoken of in the universal histories that have been fabricated in our western world. Nor will this appear strange, when we recollect that they have no relation to the petty Jewish nation which is become the object and foundation of all our pretended universal histories, in which a certain kind of authors, copying one another, seem to forget three quarters of the world.

Of Bram, Abram, Abraham.

THE name of *Bram, Brama, Abram, or Ibrahim*, seems to have been common to all the ancient inhabitants of Asia. The Indians, whom we consider as one of the first nations, make their Brama a son of God, who taught the Bramins

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how to adore him. The same name was afterwards held in veneration by other nations. The Arabians, Chaldæans and the Persians adopted it, and the Jews considered Abraham as one of their patriarchs. The Arabians, who trafficked with the Indians, were probably the first who had some confused ideas of *Brama*, whom they called *Abram*, and from whom they afterwards pretended to be descended. The Chaldæans adopted him as a legislator. The Persians called their ancient religion, *Millat Ibrabim*; the Medes, *Kish Ibrabim*. They pretended that this *Ibrabim* or *Abraham*, was a native of Bactriana, and that he had lived near the city of Balk. They revered in him the prophet of the religion of the ancient Zoroaster. Doubtless, however, he belongs only to the Jews, since they acknowledge him for their father in their sacred books.

Several learned men have been of opinion that the name is Indian, because the Indian priests call themselves Brachmans or Bramins, and several of their religious ceremonies have an immediate relation to this name, whereas among the western Asiatics, we find no institution that derives its name from Abram or Abraham. There never was any society called *Abramis*, nor any religious ceremony distinguished by that name. But since the Jewish books tell us that Abraham was the father of the Hebrew race, we ought certainly to believe them without difficulty.

The Alcoran, speaking of Abraham, quotes some of the ancient Arabic histories, but says very little concerning him. According to those histories, Abraham was the founder of Mecca.

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The Jews make him come from Chaldæa, and not from India or Bactriana; they were in the neighbourhood of Chaldæa; India and Bactriana were unknown to them. Among all those people Abraham was considered as a stranger, and Chaldæa being a country long renowned for the arts and sciences, it was an honour, humanly speaking, for a petty nation in Palestine to reckon an ancient Chaldæan sage among its ancestors.

If we were permitted to examine the historical part of the Jewish books, according to the rules which guide us in the criticism of other histories, we should certainly acknowledge, with all the commentators, that the narrative of Abraham's adventures, as related in the Pentateuch, would be liable to a variety of difficulties if they were contained in any other work.

We read in Genesis, that Abraham was seventy-five years old, when he departed out of Haran after the death of his father.

But the same book informs us, that Terah his father having begot him when seventy years old, lived to the age of two hundred and five years. Abraham, therefore, must have been an hundred and thirty-five years old when he quitted Chaldæa. It seems strange, that at that time of life he should quit the fertile country of Mesopotamia, to go three hundred miles from thence, into the barren and stony territory of Sichem, which was not a place of commerce. From Sichem we are told that he travelled upwards of six hundred miles; as far as Memphis, to buy corn, and was no sooner arrived in that city, than the king of Egypt fell in love with his wife who was at that time seventy-five years old.

I do not pretend to speak of the divine part of this adventure; I am considering it merely as an historian. It is said, that Abraham received great presents from the king of Egypt, a country which at that time must have been a powerful state, since a monarchy was established and the arts were cultivated in it. The Egyptians had learnt to guard against the inundations of the Nile, by digging canals in every part, for without these the country would not have been habitable.

Now I would ask every sensible reader, whether many ages were not requisite for the establishment of such an empire, in a country which had long been rendered inaccessible, by the very waters that fertilized it? Abraham, according to the book of Genesis, arrived in Egypt two thousand years before our vulgar æra. We therefore ought not to censure Manetho, Herodotus, Diodorus, Eratosthenes and others, for the prodigious antiquity they all agree in allowing the kingdom of Egypt; and this antiquity must have been very modern when compared with that of the Chaldæans and Syrians.

Give me leave to remark one circumstance in the history of Abraham. At his coming out of Egypt he is described as a Nomadian † shepherd, wandering between Mount Carmel and the lake Asphaltites, in the most arid desert of all Arabia Petræa. Thither he conveyed his tents with three hundred and eighteen servants, while his nephew Lot took up his residence in the city or

* The Nomades were a people who lived chiefly in tents, and removed from place to place for conveniency of pasture. *Plin.* v. 8. T.

town of Sodom. A king of Babylon, a king of Persia, a king of Pontus, and the kings of several other nations leagued together to make war on Sodom and four other neighbouring towns. Lot was their prisoner. It is not easy to comprehend how so many powerful kings, should thus enter into a league to attack an horde of Arabians in so uncultivated a spot; nor how Abraham, with the assistance only of his three hundred herds-men, defeated those monarchs and pursued them as far as Damascus. Some translators have written *Dan* for *Damascus*; but *Dan* did not exist at the time of Moses, much less at that of Abraham. It is upwards of three hundred miles from the lake Asphaltites, where Sodom was situated, to Damascus. All this is above our conceptions. Every thing is miraculous in the history of the Jews. We have already said it, and we repeat it, that we believe all these prodigies without examining them.

Of I N D I A.

IF we may be allowed to form conjectures, the Indians towards the Ganges, are perhaps those who were the first collected into a body of people. It is certain, that those parts of the earth, in which animals procure food with the greatest facility, are the soonest covered with the species they are capable of nourishing. And there is no country in the world where the human species meets with more wholesome and agreeable kinds of aliment, or in greater abundance, than towards the Ganges. Rice grows there spontaneously; the pine apple, the cocoa, the date, and the fig tree afford them delicious fruit

fruit on every side; while the orange, and the lemon trees furnish them with liquors that are at once nourishing and refreshing. Nature at the same time has given them the sugar cane. Their palm trees and their broad leaved fig trees afford them the thickest shade. They have no occasion in that country to strip their flocks, in order to defend their children from the inclemency of the seasons; even to this day they accustom them to go naked till the age of puberty. Never was any one obliged in that part of the world to risk their safety for the support of life, by attacking animals and nourishing themselves with their flesh, as mankind have done almost every where else.

In so happy a climate, mankind would of their own accord form themselves into society; they would have no occasion to dispute the possession of a barren soil for the rearing of their flocks, or to make war for a fountain or a well, as the barbarous inhabitants of Arabia Petræa used to do.

I shall say nothing here of the ancient monuments of which the bramins boast so much; it will be sufficient to observe that the most antique rarities the Chinese emperor Cam-hi had in his palace were Indian. He shewed our missionaries some Indian coins, which were far more ancient than the brass coin of the Chinese emperors; and it was probably from the Indians, that the kings of Persia learnt the art of coining.

The Greeks before the time of Pythagoras used to travel into India for instruction. The signs for the seven planets and the seven metals, are almost in every part of the world the same that were invented by the Indians: the Arabians were obliged to them likewise for their figures.

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The game* which does the greatest honour to the human understanding is incontestably of Indian origin; the elephants, instead of which we have substituted towers, are a proof of this.

In a word, all the ancient nations with which we are acquainted, as the Persians, Phœnicians, Arabians and Egyptians, were accustomed from time immemorial to go to traffick in India, and to bring back from thence the spices, which nature has given only to those climates. The Indians, on the contrary, never visited any of those nations.

We are told of a Bacchus, who set out from Egypt, or from some country in the western part of Asia in order to conquer India. This Bacchus, whoever he was, must have known therefore that at the extremity of our continent, there was a country preferable to his own. Necessity first induced mankind to plunder one another; they invaded India only because it was rich; but this is certain, that the rich people must have been collected into a body, and civilized, long before those who came to plunder them.

What strikes me the most in India, is that ancient opinion of the transmigration of souls, which in time extended itself as far as China, and even into Europe. Not that the Indians knew what the soul is; but they imagined that this principle, whether ærial, or igneous, animated different bodies successively. It will be worth while to consider the effect which this system of philosophy must have had on the manners of mankind. The apprehension of being condemned by Visnou or Brama, to become the vilest and unhappiest of animals, would surely be a powerful

* Alluding to the game of chess. T. check

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check to the wicked and perverse. We shall soon see that all great nations had some idea of another life, tho' with different notions. Among the ancient empires, the Chinese seem to be the only people that did not establish the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Their first legislators contented themselves with instituting moral laws; they thought it would be sufficient to exhort mankind to virtue, and to force them to it by a rigorous mode of government.

The Indians, by embracing the doctrine of the metempsychosis, avoided a variety of crimes. The fear of killing their fathers or their mothers, in putting to death men or animals, inspired them with horror for murder or any kind of violence. These sentiments in time became natural to them, so that all the Indians, whose families are not allied either to the Arabians or the Tartars, are to this day the mildest men upon earth. Their religion, and the temperature of their climate, made those people exactly like the harmless animals we preserve in our sheep folds and dovecots, in order to kill them at our pleasure. All the savage nations that descended from Caucasus, from Taurus, or from Immaus, to subdue the people bordering on the Indus, the Hydaspes, or the Ganges, became their masters the moment they appeared.

The same thing would happen at present to those primitive Christians called Quakers, who are as peaceful as the Indians. They would soon be devoured by other nations, if they were not protected by their warlike countrymen. The Christian religion, which is literally adhered to only by these Quakers, is as averse to blood as that of Pythagoras. But the people of Christendom have never observed the rules of their religion,

religion, whereas the ancient Indian tribes have uniformly put theirs in practice. Hence it is that Pythagorism is the only religion in the world that has been able to make the dread of committing murder a sentiment of religion and filial piety. The transmigration of souls is a system so simple, and at the same time so probable in the eyes of ignorant people, it is so easy to believe, that what animates one man, may afterwards animate another, that all those who adopted this religion, imagined they saw the souls of their relations in all the persons who surrounded them. They considered themselves as the brothers, the fathers, the mothers, or the children of one another. Such an idea necessarily inspired them with sentiments of universal charity. They trembled at the thoughts of wounding a fellow creature, who might perhaps be one of their family. In a word, the ancient religion of India, and that of the literati in China, are the only ones in which mankind have not been barbarians. But how happened it that these same people who considered it as a crime to put an animal to death, should afterwards allow their women to burn themselves upon the dead bodies of their husbands, in the vain hope of regenerating again in some happier and more beautiful body? It is because fanaticism and contradictions are the lot of human nature.

We ought above all to consider that abstinence from animal flesh is an effect of the nature of the climate. Meat soon becomes putrid in India, by reason of the great heat and humidity of the atmosphere; and at any rate, it is a very unwholesome food in that country. Strong liquors are likewise repugnant to nature, in a part of the

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world where she requires refreshing drink. The doctrine of the metempsychosis was indeed adopted by some of our northern nations. The Celtæ were of opinion they should regenerate in other bodies; but if to this doctrine the Druids had added abstinence from animal food, they certainly would not have been obeyed.

We know but little of the ancient ceremonies of the Bramins, which are even continued to the present day. They communicate but little of the books of the Hanscrit, which they still preserve in the ancient sacred language. Their Vedams were as long unknown as the Zend of the Persians, or the Five Kings of the Chinese. It is not more than an hundred and twenty years since we first heard of the last of these books in Europe; the Zend has been seen only by the celebrated Dr. Hyde who had not wherewithal to buy the book or to pay the interpreter, and by Sir John Chardin, who refused to pay the price that was asked for it. We had only the Sadder, or extract from the Zend, of which I have spoken very fully elsewhere.

The king's library at Paris has lately had the good fortune to be enriched with an ancient book of the Bramins, entitled the *Ezour-vedam*, written prior to Alexander's expedition into India, together with a ritual of all the ancient ceremonies of the Brachmans, entitled the *Cormo-vedam*. This manuscript, translated by a Bramin, is not indeed the Vedam itself, but is a summary of the opinions and rites contained in that work. We may therefore flatter ourselves with having at present some knowledge of the three most ancient writings that are in the world.

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We must despair of ever being able to procure any thing from the Egyptians; their books are lost; their religion is annihilated; they no longer understand their old vulgar tongue, much less their sacred language. Thus, what was at no great distance from us, and deposited in immense libraries, is lost for ever, and we have found at the extremity of the earth, monuments equally authentic, which we could have no hopes of discovering.

It is impossible to doubt the truth or authenticity of this ritual of the Brachmans, which I have just now mentioned. The author certainly does not flatter his sect; he does not attempt to disguise their superstitions, to give them an appearance of probability by unnatural explanations, or to excuse them by allegories. He relates the most extravagant laws with all the simplicity of candour. The human mind appears there in all its wretchedness. If the Bramins observed all the regulations of their Vedam, there is no monk who would subject himself to such discipline. The son of a Bramin is no sooner brought into the world, than he becomes a slave to ceremonies. They rub his tongue with a mixture of rosin and flour, and pronounce the word *Oum*. Twenty divinities are invoked before they cut his navel string, but at the same time they say to him, "Live, to command mankind," and he no sooner begins to speak, than they make him sensible of the dignity of his station. In fact, the Brachmans were for a long time sovereigns in India, and theocracy was established in that vast country, more than in any other part of the world.

Soon after the child is born, he is exposed to the moon, and they pray to the supreme Being

to efface the sins which this infant may have committed although he is only eight days old; they then sing anthems, and after an hundred ceremonies name the child *Chormo*, which is a title of honour among the Brachmans.

As soon as the child is able to walk, he spends his time in bathing himself, and in repeating prayers. He performs what is called the sacrifice of the dead, a ceremony instituted with a view to induce Brama to give the souls of the child's ancestors an agreeable residence in other bodies.

They pray to the five winds that they may issue out from the five openings in the human body; nor is this more extraordinary than the prayers that were offered up to the god *Fart*, by the good old women of Rome.

The Bramins perform none of the functions of nature nor any act in life without prayers. The first time the child's head is shaved, the father says very devoutly to the razor, "Razor, shave my son as thou didst the sun and the god Indro." It is indeed possible, that the god Indro might formerly have been shaved, but that the sun was so too, is not easily conceived, unless the Bramins adopted our Apollo, whom we still represent without a beard.

A recital of all their ceremonies would be as tedious as to us they seem ridiculous; and they are so blind as to say the same thing of ours. But there is one mystery among them, which ought not to be passed over in silence; this is the *matricha machom*. By this mystery they procure themselves a new being, a new life.

They suppose the soul to be in the breast, and this indeed was the opinion of almost all the ancients. They pass their hand from the breast
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to the head, pressing at the same time upon the nerve which they suppose extends from one of these organs to the other, and in this manner they convey the soul into the brain. When the young man who performs this ceremony, thinks himself certain that his soul is got into his head, he cries out, "My soul and body are reunited to the supreme Being, and I myself am a part of the divinity."

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Pantasma This opinion was that of the most respectable philosophers of Greece, of those stoics who elevated human nature above herself, and likewise that of the divine Antoninus; and we must confess, that nothing could be more capable of inspiring men with great virtues. Men who fancy themselves a part of the divinity, will be careful to do nothing that is unworthy of God himself.

In this law of the Brahmans we find ten commandments, which point out ten sins to be avoided. They are divided into three kinds, sins of the body, sins of the speech, and sins of the will. To strike or kill one's neighbour, to rob him or to violate his wife, these are sins of the body; to dissimulate, to lie, or to utter injurious expressions are sins of the speech; and those of the will, consist in wishing evil, in envying the happiness of others, or in viewing their misfortunes without pitying them. These ten commandments make us excuse all their ridiculous ceremonies. It is evident that morality is the same among all civilized nations, and that customs which are held sacred in some countries, appear extravagant or contemptible in others. The different rites that are at present established in the world serve to divide mankind, whereas morality has a tendency to unite them.

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The superstition of the Brachmans never prevented them from acknowledging one only God. Strabo, in his fifteenth book, says, that they adore a supreme God, that they keep silence several years before they venture to speak, that they are sober, chaste, and temperate, that they lead a life of virtue, and die without regret. Nearly the same thing is said of them by St. Clement of Alexandria, Apuleius, Porphyrius, Palladius and St. Ambrose. We ought not to forget to remark that they had a terrestrial paradise, and that the men who abused the goodness of God, were driven out of that paradise.

The fall of man is the foundation of the theology of almost all the ancient nations. The natural inclination of mankind to complain of the present moments and to extol the past, has in every country led to the invention of a kind of golden age succeeded by ages of iron. What is still more singular is, that the Vedam of the ancient Brachmans, teaches that the first man was *Adimo*, and the first woman *Procriti*. *Adimo* signified *Lord*, and *Procriti* implied *life*; in the same manner as *Heva* among the Phœnicians and Jews, signified *life* or the *serpent*. This conformity well deserves our attention.

Of C H I N A.

CAN we presume to speak of the Chinese without referring to their own annals? Their authenticity is confirmed by the unanimous testimony of our travellers of different sects; Dominicans, Jesuits, Lutherans and Calvinists all agree on this head. It is evident that the empire of China was formed upwards of four thousand

land years ago. This ancient people never heard of any of those physical revolutions, those inundations or conflagrations, the weak remembrance of which is preserved in the fables of Deucalion's Deluge, and the Fall of Phæton. The climate of China therefore escaped those evils, in the same manner as it has always been preserved from the plague, a disease which has so often ravaged Africa, Asia and Europe.

If any annals can be considered as authentic, it must be those of the Chinese, who have constantly combined the history of the heavens with that of the earth. They are the only people in the world who have marked their epochas by eclipses and by the conjunction of the planets; and our astronomers who have examined their calculations, have been astonished to find almost all of them exact. Other nations were inventing allegorical fables, while the Chinese, attentive to their astronomical observations, were writing their history with a simplicity which is unparalleled in any other part of Asia.

The history of each reign has been recorded by cotemporary writers; there are no different modes of reckoning among them; no chronologies which contradict one another. Our missionaries very candidly relate, that when they were speaking of the emperor Cam-hi, concerning the different chronologies of the Vulgate, the Septuagint and the Samaritans, Cam-hi said to them, "Is it possible, that the books you believe in can be so different from one another."

The Chinese wrote upon tablets of bamboo, at a time when the Chaldæans wrote only upon brick; and they are still in possession of some of those ancient tablets, which their varnishes have preserved

preserved from decay. These are perhaps the most ancient monuments in the world. They have no history prior to that of their emperors ; they know of no fictions or prodigies, nor of any inspired person who called himself a demi-god, as was the case amongst the Egyptians and Greeks ; the moment the Chinese began to write, they wrote in a rational manner.

Their history differs above all from that of other nations, in its making no mention of a college of priests, which had ever any influence over the laws. The Chinese historians do not go back to those savage times when it was necessary to deceive mankind, in order to guide them. Other nations begin their history with the origin of the world ; the Zend of the Persians, the Shasta and the Vedam of the Indians, Sanchoniathon, Manetho, and even Hesiod, all begin with the origin of things and the creation of the world. The Chinese have not been so weak as to do this ; their history is only that of historical times.

It is here that we ought particularly to apply one leading principle, that a nation, whose earliest chronicles prove the existence of a great, wise and potent empire, must have been formed into a body of people many ages before this. We have here an instance of a people, who for more than four thousand years, have written the annals of their empire ; and he must be ignorant indeed, who does not know, that for a nation to acquire all the arts that human society requires, and to proceed so far as not only to write, but to write well, a greater length of time must have been necessary than the Chinese empire has lasted, reckoning only from the time of the emperor Fo-hi, to the present hour. All the Chinese literati are con-

vinced that the book of the Five Kings, was written two thousand three hundred years before our vulgar æra. This work was therefore composed four hundred years before the Babylonians made their first observations, which were sent into Greece by Callisthenes. In good truth, does it become our Parisian literati to dispute the antiquity of a Chinese book, which all the tribunals in China consider as authentic?

In the rudiments of all the arts, men advance more slowly than they do after they have attained to a certain degree of improvement. We ought to recollect that five hundred years ago, there was hardly any body in the North, or in Germany, or amongst ourselves, that knew how to write. The tallies which are still in use with our bakers, were our hieroglyphics and account books. There was no other arithmetic used in collecting our taxes, and the word tally (*taille*) is still a proof of this in our provinces. Our capricious laws which were digested in writing only about four hundred and fifty years ago, sufficiently prove how uncommon the art of writing was at that time. There is not a nation in Europe that has not of late made a greater progress in all the arts in half a century, than it had done from the irruptions of the Barbarians to the fourteenth century.

I shall not attempt to inquire at present how it has happened that the Chinese, who have attained to the knowledge and practice of every thing useful to society, have nevertheless made less progress in the sciences than we have done. They are as little versed in natural philosophy, as we were two hundred years ago, or as the Greeks

and Romans ever were ; but they have perfected morality, which is the first of all sciences.

Their extensive and populous empire was governed like one family, of which their monarch was considered as the father, and their forty tribunals as the elder brothers, at a time when we were wandering in small numbers in the forest of Ardenne.

Their religion was simple, rational, awful, and free from every kind of superstition and barbarism, when we had still our *Teutates*, to whom the Druids sacrificed the children of our ancestors in large cradles of ozers.

The Chinese emperors themselves have been accustomed twice a year to offer up to the God of the universe, to *Changti*, to *Tien*, to the principle of all things, the first fruits of what they have sown with their own hands. This custom has continued during forty centuries, even in the midst of revolutions, and of the most horrid calamities.

The religion of the empire and tribunals has never been disgraced by impostors, or disturbed by quarrels, between the empire and the priesthood; nor has it ever proved a source of fanaticism and assassination. It is in these things more especially, that the Chinese excel all the nations in the universe.

Their Confucius invented neither new opinions nor new ceremonies. He pretended to the gift neither of inspiration nor prophecy. He was a magistrate who taught the ancient laws. We sometimes, tho' very improperly, say *the religion of Confucius*, for he had no other than that which the emperor, the tribunals, and the first sages of the empire had adopted. All he recommends
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is virtue; his doctrine contains nothing mysterious. In his first book he observes, that to learn to govern, a man ought to employ all his days in correcting himself: in the second, he proves that God has implanted virtue in the heart of man; that man is not naturally vicious, but becomes so through his own fault: the third is a collection of pure maxims, in which you meet with no mean ideas or ridiculous allegories. He had five thousand disciples, and might have placed himself at the head of a powerful party, but he chose rather to instruct than to govern mankind.

In the essay on general history, we have noticed the temerity with which certain writers, at the extremity of our western world, have attempted to reproach the Chinese government with atheism. But how inconsiderate must those authors be, who presume to treat an empire as atheistical; most of whose laws are founded on the knowledge of a supreme Being, rewarding and punishing with justice. The inscriptions on their temples, of which we have authentic copies, are "To the true principle of all things, who is
" without beginning and without end, who hath
" produced, and who governs the universe, whose
" goodness and justice are infinite, and who en-
" lightens, supports, and regulates all nature."

The Jesuits, because they were not liked in Europe, have been reproached with flattering the atheists of China. A Frenchman, named Maigrot, who was bishop of Conon, and did not know a word of Chinese, was deputed by the pope to go and determine the dispute on the spot. This person censured Confucius as an atheist, upon the strength of the following passage in the works

of that great man: "Heaven has given me virtue, "man cannot injure me." Never did any of our greatest saints deliver a more celestial maxim. If Confucius was an atheist, Cato and the chancellor de L'Hopital were such likewise.

Let us once more observe, for the sake of putting calumny to the blush, that the same persons who asserted in opposition to Bayle, that a society of atheists could not possibly exist, pretended in the same breath, that the most ancient government upon earth was atheistical. We cannot be too much ashamed of our contradictions.

Let us likewise repeat what we have already said, that the Chinese literati, who adored one only God, left the vulgar to the superstitions of the bonzes. These admitted the sect of Lao-kium, that of Fo, and several others. The magistrates who were sensible that the common people might safely have a religion different from that of the state, tolerated the bonzes, and knew how to restrain them within bounds. In almost every other country, the bonzes had the principal authority.

It is true that the laws of China make no mention of rewards or punishments after death. This would seem as if they were unwilling to assert what they do not know. This difference between them and all other great nations is truly astonishing. The doctrine of Hell is useful; and yet the Chinese government has never admitted it. They have contented themselves with exhorting mankind to revere heaven and to be just. They have always thought that a strict police uniformly enforced, would be more effectual than opinions which might be contested; and that the vulgar would be more in fear of temporary laws, than
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of punishments hereafter. We shall soon have occasion to speak of another people, infinitely less considerable, who had nearly the same idea, or rather who had no idea at all, but were guided by means unknown to the rest of mankind.

We will here only recapitulate that the Chinese empire subsisted with splendor, at a time when the Chaldæans were beginning the course of nineteen hundred years of astronomical observations, which were sent into Greece by Callisthenes. The bramins reigned at that time in a part of India; the Persians had their laws; the Arabians in the South, and the Scythians in the North, dwelt in tents. Egypt, of which we are now about to speak, was a powerful kingdom.

Of E G Y P T.

IT seems clear to me, that the Egyptians, ancient as they are, could not be formed into a civilized, industrious and powerful body of people, till long after the nations of which we have been speaking. The reason of this is evident. Egypt is bounded on each side as far as Delta, by a chain of rocks, between which the Nile precipitates itself in its descent from Ethiopia, from the South to the North. From the cataracts of the Nile, to the mouth of that river, the distance in a straight line is only an hundred and sixty leagues, and the country is only from ten to fifteen or twenty leagues in width, till you come to Delta, where lower Egypt begins, which extends about fifty leagues from East to West. To the right of the Nile are the deserts of Thebais, and to the left are the uninhabitable sand of Libya, which

which extend as far as the petty country where formerly stood the temple of Ammon.

The inundations of the Nile would naturally for many centuries prevent men from settling on a spot of earth, which was under water four months of the year. These stagnate waters continuing to accumulate, must for a long time have made Egypt one entire swamp. This is not the case with the borders of the Euphrates, the Tigris, the Indus, the Ganges, and the rivers which almost every summer overflow their banks at the melting of the snows. But the waters of these rivers do not spread so far as those of the Nile, and the vast plains that surround them, allow the husbandman full liberty to profit by the fertility of the soil.

It is observable likewise, that the plague, which is so fatal to the human species, prevails in Egypt at least once in ten years; and must have been much more destructive, when the stagnant waters of the Nile added their infectious miasmata to this horrid contagion; so that population could advance but slowly in Egypt, during a great number of ages.

The natural order of things seem therefore to prove beyond a doubt, that Egypt was one of the last countries that was inhabited. The Troglydytes who dwelt in the rocks bordering on the Nile, must have laboured long and painfully before they could dig canals to carry off the waters, or erect huts and raise them five and twenty feet above the soil. And yet all this was necessary to be done, before either Thebes with its hundred gates, or Memphis could be built, and before men could think of constructing pyramids. It seems strange that no ancient historian has made

made these reflections though they appear so natural.

We have already observed, that at the time of Abraham Egypt was a powerful kingdom. Its kings had already erected some of those pyramids which still excite the admiration of travellers. The Arabians inform us, that the largest was built by Saurid, who lived many centuries before Abraham is said to have existed. It is not known at what time the famous Thebes with its hundred gates, or *Diospolis*, the city of God as it was called, was built. It would seem as if in those remote times, all great cities were called *the cities of God*, as was the case with Babylon. But who will believe, that from each of the hundred gates of Thebes, there issued forth two hundred chariots of war, and an hundred thousand combatants? This would in the whole make twenty thousand chariots and ten millions of soldiers; and if we reckon only five inhabitants to one soldier, the number of souls in the city must have amounted to at least fifty millions; an incredible number for a single town, in a country not so large as Spain or France, and which, according to Diodorus Siculus, had not more than three millions of inhabitants, nor more than an hundred and sixty thousand soldiers for its defence. Diodorus in his first book observes, that Egypt was formerly so populous, as to contain seven millions of inhabitants, but that in his time, the number did not exceed three millions.

You no more believe what is related of Sesostris and his conquests, than you do this account of the ten millions of soldiers who came out of the hundred gates of Thebes. Don't you fancy you are reading the history of Picrocolis, when they,

they, who copying after Herodotus, tell you that the father of Sesostris, founding his hopes on a dream and an oracle, considered his son as one destined to conquer the world; that he caused all the children who were born on the same day as his son, to be brought up at his court to the profession of arms, and that they were never suffered to eat till after they had run eight of our leagues; that at length Sesostris set out with six hundred thousand men, and seven and twenty thousand chariots of war, in order to conquer all the countries from India to the Euxine sea, and that he subdued Mingrelia and Georgia which at that time was called Colchis. Herodotus has not a doubt, that Sesostris left colonies in Colchis, because he had seen persons at Colchis who from their tawny complexions, and their frizled hair resembled the Egyptians. I should rather suppose that those species of Scythians, who inhabited the borders of the Black and the Caspian seas, and who overspread Asia before the reign of Cyrus, had carried back with them some of the Egyptians into slavery, and that it was the descendants of these that Herodotus saw, or fancied he saw at Colchis. If it is true, that the Colchidians had really the superstition to practice circumcision, they had probably adopted this custom from the Egyptians, as the Northern nations almost always retained the religious ceremonies of the civilized people they conquered.

Never were the Egyptians a formidable people, nor did ever any enemy invade without subduing them. The Scythians began; after the Scythians came Nebuchadnezzar, who conquered Egypt without meeting with any resistance; Cyrus had nothing more to do, than to send thither

one of his lieutenants. They revolted indeed under Cambyſes, but one campaign was ſufficient to reduce them to obedience; and ſo greatly did this Cambyſes deſpiſe the Egyptians, that he killed their god Apis in their preſence. Ochus made Egypt one of his provinces. Alexander, Cæſar, Auguſtus, and the caliph Omar all of them conquered Egypt with equal facility. Theſe ſame people of Colchoſ returned again under the name of Mamalukes, and made themſelves maſters of Egypt at the time of the cruſades. In fine, Selim conquered Egypt in a ſingle campaign, as all thoſe had done who had ever attacked it; our cruſaders are the only troops that were ever beat by thoſe Egyptians, the moſt cowardly people upon earth, and the reaſon is that they were at that time governed by the Mamalukes of Colchoſ.

It is true that a degenerated people may formerly have been a conquering nation, witneſs the Greeks and Romans. But we are more certain of the ancient grandeur of the Romans and Greeks, than we are of that of Seſoſtris.

I will not deny, that he whom they call Seſoſtris might make ſome ſucceſſful attacks upon a few Ethiopians, a few Arabians and ſome of the inhabitants of Phœnicia. In the language of exaggeration, this would be ſpoken of as a conqueſt of the whole earth. There is no conquered people, that does not pretend to have ſubdued other nations in former times. The vainglory of their ancient ſuperiority, conſoles them in their preſent ſtate of humiliation.

Herodotus relates ingenuouſly to the Greeks every thing he had learnt from the Egyptians; but how happened it that ſpeaking, as they did,

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only of prodigies, they said nothing to him of the famous sores with which the people of Egypt were afflicted; of the magic combat between the forcerers of Pharaoh and the ministers of the God of the Jews, or of the army that was swallowed up by the waters of the Red Sea, while the Jews walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea, the waters forming as it were a wall on their right hand and on their left * ? This was certainly the greatest event in the history of the world; and yet neither Herodotus, nor Manetho, nor Eratosthenes, nor any other of the Greek writers who were all of them so fond of the marvellous, and so well acquainted with the Egyptians, make the least mention of these miracles, which one would think could not fail to be deeply imprinted in the memory of all succeeding generations. I am far from meaning to weaken the authority of the Hebrew books by these reflections, because I revere them as I ought to do. I am only astonished at the silence of all the Egyptians and Greeks on these subjects. Doubtless God was unwilling that so divine a history should be transmitted to us by any profane hand.

Of the Language of the Egyptians and of their Symbols.

THE language of the Egyptians had no affinity to that of any of the nations of Asia. Among these people we find neither the words *Adoni* or *Adonai*, nor *Bal* or *Baal*, terms signifying the Lord; nor *mitra*, which was the sun amongst the Persians; nor *melch*, which signified king in Syriac; nor *shak*, which implies the same thing

* Exodus xiv. 28, 29.

among the Indians and Persians. On the contrary, we find that the Egyptian word for a king was *Pharaoh*; *Oshireth* (*Osiris*) answered to the *mitra* of the Persians, and the word *on* signified the sun. The Chaldæan priests called themselves *mag*, whereas those of the Egyptians, according to Diodorus Siculus, were stiled *choen*. In short the hieroglyphics, the alphabetical characters of Egypt which have escaped the injuries of time, and which we still see engraved on their obelisks, have no affinity to those of other nations.

Before mankind could invent hieroglyphics, they must certainly have had figurative signs; for in fact what else could the first men do, than what we ourselves do when in their situation? If a child finds himself in a country, the language of which he is unacquainted with, he expresses himself by signs; if these signs are not comprehended, he then chalks out the things he wants upon a wall, provided he has the least sagacity.

Mankind therefore began with painting in a rude manner the things they wanted to express, and the art of drawing without doubt preceded the art of writing. It was in this manner that the Peruvians and Mexicans wrote; they had not extended the art to a greater length. Such was the method of all symbolical figures. Two hands united signified peace; arrows were the mark of war; and an eye was the type of the Divinity; a sceptre was the emblem of royalty, and the lines which connected these figures were expressive of short phrases.

The Chinese invented characters to express each word of their language. But to what nation are we indebted for the invention of the

alphabet; an invention, which by expressing the different sounds, we are able to articulate, enables us to combine in writing all the words we can possibly make use of? Who could thus teach mankind to delineate their thoughts with the greatest facility? I am not disposed to relate here all the fables that the ancients invented concerning this art, which serves to perpetuate all the others; I will only say, that many ages must have been necessary to attain to it.

The *choen*, or Egyptian priests, continued for a long time to write in hieroglyphics, a custom prohibited by the second article of the Hebrew law; and when the people of Egypt began to use alphabetical characters, the choen adopted different ones, which they stiled sacred, that there might be a perpetual barrier between them and the vulgar. The magi and bramins acted in the same manner; so necessary it is to keep mankind in the dark, if we wish to govern them. These choen had not only characters peculiar to themselves, but they had likewise preserved the ancient Egyptian language, when time had changed that of the vulgar. Manetho, who is quoted by Eusebius, speaks of two columns engraved by *Toth*, the first Hermes, in characters of the sacred language. But who knows at what time this ancient Hermes existed? It is very probable that he flourished upwards of eight hundred years before the time at which they place Moses; for Sanchoniathon says, that he had read the writings of *Toth*, who lived eight hundred years before his time. Now Sanchoniathon wrote in Phœnicia, a country bordering on the little district of Canaan, which, according to the Jewish books, was laid waste by Joshua; if he had been cotemporary

porary with, or had lived after the time of Moses, he without doubt would have spoken of so extraordinary a man, and of his astonishing prodigies; he would have given his testimony in favour of this Jewish legislator, and Eusebius would not have failed to have taken advantage of the acknowledgments of Sanchoniathon.

At any rate, the Egyptians very scrupulously preserved their first symbols. It is a curious thing to see upon their monuments, a serpent biting his tail, as a symbol of the twelve months of the year; and each of these twelve months expressed by animals, which are different from those of the present zodiac. We likewise find the five days, that were afterwards added to the twelve months, represented by a little serpent, upon which five figures are seated; these are a hawk, a man, a dog, a lion, and a stork. Kircher has given an engraving of them, from monuments that are preserved at Rome. Thus we see that every thing in antiquity is represented by allegories or symbols.

Of the Monuments of the Egyptians

IT is certain, that after the ages the Egyptians employed in fertilizing their soil by means of the Nile, and after the time when their villages began to be changed into opulent towns, then the necessary arts being brought to perfection, the more splendid ones began to be cultivated. It was then that their sovereigns began to employ their subjects, and the Arabians bordering on lake Sirbon, in building their palaces and their tombs in form of pyramids, in cutting enormous stones in the quarries of upper Egypt, in convey-
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ing them upon rafts as far as Memphis, and in placing great flat stones upon massive columns, constructed without taste or proportion. They were acquainted with the great, but never with the beautiful. They instructed the first Greeks, but afterwards the Greeks, when they had built Alexandria, were their masters in every thing.

It is a melancholy circumstance, that in the war with Cæsar, one half of the famous library at Alexandria was burnt, and that the other half served to heat the baths of the Mahometans, when Omar subdued Egypt. If any part of that immense collection had been preserved, we should at least have known something of the origin of the superstitions with which these people were infected, and have had a better idea of their philosophy, antiquities and sciences.

They must necessarily have been for many ages in peace, otherwise their princes could not have had time or leisure to raise those prodigious buildings, the greater part of which are still extant.

Their pyramids must have been the result of many years labour and infinite expence; a great part of the nation, and many foreign slaves must have been long employed in those immense works, which may be said to have been raised by despotism, vanity, servitude and superstition. In fact, no one but a despotic sovereign could accomplish such undertakings. England, for example, is at present more powerful than Egypt ever was, but could a king of England be able to employ his subjects in constructing such monuments?

The share that variety had in these works is evident; the ancient kings of Egypt endeavoured to outvie one another in the pyramid they raised

for their fathers or themselves; servitude procured the labouring hands, and as to superstition, it is well known that these pyramids were tombs, and that the *chockamatim* or *choen*, or in other words, the Egyptian priests, had persuaded the nation that the soul would return into the body again at the end of a thousand years. Their aim therefore was to preserve the body a thousand years from corruption; hence, they embalmed it with the greatest care, and in order to secure it from accidents, inclosed it in a mass of stone which was shut on every side. The kings and the grandees erected their tombs in the form the most likely to resist the injuries of time. By these means, their bodies have been preserved much longer than could possibly have been expected; we now procure Egyptian mummies that have been upwards of four thousand years entombed in this manner, so that the dead bodies have lasted as long as the pyramids.

This notion of a resurrection after ten centuries, was adopted afterwards by the Greeks, who were the disciples of the Egyptians, and by the Romans, who were the disciples of the Greeks. We find it in the sixth book of the *Æneid*, which is nothing more than a description of the mysteries of Isis, and Ceres Eleusina:

Has omnes ubi mille rotam volvere per annos
Lethæum ad fluvium Deus advocat agmine magno;
Scilicet ut memores supera et convexa revisant,
Rursus et incipiant in corpore velle reverti *.

It was afterwards introduced among the Christians, who adopted the idea of a millennium, and

* All these thin airy throngs thy eyes behold,
When o'er their heads a thousand years have roll'd,
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has been occasionally revived even to the present time. Thus, we find that several opinions have travelled round the world. This will be sufficient to shew the motives that occasioned the building of the pyramids. I shall not repeat what has been so often said of their architecture and dimensions, because I am here only inquiring into the history of the human mind.

Of the Egyptian Rites, and of Circumcision.

IN the first place, did the Egyptians acknowledge one supreme God? If such a question had been put to the lower class of people, they would not have known what to answer; if to young persons who were studying the Egyptian theology, they would have talked for a long time without understanding what they said; but if the question had been put to any one of the sages who were consulted by Pythagoras, Plato or Plutarch, he would have replied without hesitation, that he adored only one God; he would have quoted the ancient inscription on the statue of Isis; "I am that which is," and this other, "I am all that hath been or that is to be. No mortal can remove my veil." He would have pointed out the globe placed over the gate of the temple at Memphis, which represented the unity of the divine nature, under the name of *Knef*. The most sacred name in the Egyptian language

In mighty crowds to yon Lethæan flood
Swam at the potent summons of the god;
There the deep draught of dark oblivion drain;
Then they desire new bodies to obtain,
And visit heav'ns ethereal realms again.

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was *Y-ha-ho*, which was afterwards adopted by the Jews. They used to pronounce it in different ways, but Clement of Alexandria assures us, in his *Stromates*, that they who entered into the temple of Serapis, were obliged to carry with them the name of *I-ha-ho*, or else that of *I-ha-hou*, which signifies the eternal God. The Arabians have retained only the syllable *hou*, which has been adopted by the Turks, who pronounce it with greater respect than the word *Allah*, for they make use of the latter in conversation, whereas they employ *hou* only in their prayers. We may observe by the bye, that when Said Effendi, the Turkish ambassador, saw the comedy of the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* performed at Paris, and they came to that ridiculous part of the performance, where the hero of the piece is made a Turk, and the sacred name of *hou* is pronounced with derision and the most contemptible gestures, he considered it as the most horrid profanation.

But to return to our subject. The priests of Egypt had their sacred ox, their sacred dog, and their sacred crocodile! Yes, and the Romans likewise had their sacred geese, and their gods of every kind; their devotees had among their penates, or household gods, a god of the close stool, *deum stercutium*, and the god fart, *deum crepitum*: but did they not, nevertheless, acknowledge the *Deum optimum maximum*, the master of gods and men? Where is the country that has not produced an immense multitude of superstitious persons, and a small number of philosophers?

There is one thing we may particularly remark with regard to Egypt and all other nations, and this is, that notwithstanding the attachment mankind have for ancient customs, they have never

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maintained a uniformity either of laws or opinions. Geometry is the only thing that is immutable, all the rest is a continual variation.

The learned dispute, and will continue to dispute. One assures us that all the ancient nations were idolaters; another denies it. One says that they adored only one God, without image; another pretends that they worshiped several gods, in as many images. Both are in the right; we ought to consider the difference of times and opinions. When the Ptolemies and the principal priests were laughing at the ox Apis, the common people were on their knees before him.

Juvenal says, that the Egyptians worshiped onions; but no historian says this. There is an essential difference between consecrating an onion and making it a god. Mankind do not adore every thing they place upon the altar. We read in Cicero, that altho' men had exhausted all kinds of superstitions, they were not yet so ridiculous as to eat their gods, and that this was the only thing wanting to compleat their absurdity.

Did circumcision begin with the Egyptians, the Arabians or the Ethiopians? I cannot say; all I know is, that the priests of antiquity imprinted marks of their consecration on their bodies, in the same manner as the Roman soldiers were afterwards burnt in the hand with an hot iron. In some countries, the priests scarified their bodies, as was the case with the priests of Bellona; in others, they were castrated, as was the case with the priests of Cybele.

It was not from motives of cleanliness or health that the Ethiopians, the Arabians, and the Egyptians used to practise circumcision. It has been said that their prepuce was naturally too long;

long; but if we may be allowed to judge of a nation by an individual, I once saw a young Ethiopian, who had not been circumcised, and whose prepuce was exactly like ours.

I know not what nation it was that first thought of carrying in procession the *kteis* and the *phallum*, or in other words, the representation of the distinguishing marks of male and female animals; a ceremony which would now a days be considered as indecent, but which was formerly held sacred. The Egyptians adopted this custom; they thought it right to offer up the first fruits to the gods, and to sacrifice to them whatever was most precious. It neither seems unnatural nor unjust that the priests should offer up a small part of the organ of generation to those by whom every thing was supposed to be engendered. The Ethiopians and Arabians circumcised their girls also, by cutting off a very small portion of the nymphæ; this is a sufficient proof that neither health nor cleanliness were the reason of this ceremony, it being evident that an uncircumcised girl may be as clean as one that is circumcised.

When the Egyptian priests had rendered this a sacred operation, their disciples submitted to it likewise; but after a time, this distinguishing mark was confined wholly to the priests. We don't find that any of the Ptolemies were circumcised, nor do we ever find any of the Roman authors branding the Egyptians with the epithet of *apella*, which they so often bestow on the Jews. These Jews had adopted circumcision from the Egyptians, together with some of their other ceremonies. They have always continued to practise it as well as the Arabians and Ethiopians. The Turks have likewise submitted to it, altho' it is not pre-

scribed in the Aleoran. It is only an ancient custom which originated from superstition, and has been preserved through habit.

Of the Mysteries of the Egyptians.

I AM far from pretending to know what nation first invented those mysteries which were so much in vogue from the Euphrates to the Tiber. The Egyptians do not say who was the author of the mysteries of Isis; Zoroaster is said to have established those that were adopted in Persia, Cadmus and Inachus were considered as the inventors of them in Greece, Orpheus in Thrace, and Minos in Crete. It is certain that all those mysteries announced a future life; for Celsus says to the Christians *, “ You boast of believing in “ eternal punishments, and was not this taught “ to all who were instructed in the mysteries?”

The Greeks, who took so many things from the Egyptians, and who were indebted to them for their Tartarus, their Acheron, and their Charon, likewise founded their famous Eleusinian mysteries on the mysteries of Isis. But that the mysteries of Zoroaster did not precede those of the Egyptians, is what no one can possibly affirm. Both the one and the other were of the highest antiquity; and all the authors, whether Greek or Latin, who have mentioned them, allow that the unity of God, the immortality of the soul, and the doctrine of rewards and punishments after death, were announced in those sacred ceremonies.

It seems probable that the Egyptians having once established these mysteries, preserved the

* Origines, lib. 8.

ceremonies that accompanied them; for notwithstanding their extreme levity, they were uniformly superstitious. The prayer we find in Apuleius, where Lucius is initiated in the mysteries of Isis, must have been the ancient prayer. "The celestial powers serve thee; hell itself is subservient to thee, the universe moves under thy hand, thou treadest Tartarus under thy feet, the stars answer at thy call, the seasons return at thy orders, the elements obey thee, &c."

Can we have a stronger proof than this, that the unity of one only God was acknowledged by the Egyptians, in the midst of all their contemptible superstitions?

Of the Greeks, their ancient Deluges, their Alphabets and their Genius.

GREECE is a little mountainous country, intersected by the sea, and nearly of the same size as Great Britain. Every part of this country evinces the physical revolutions it must have experienced. The adjacent islands sufficiently prove, by the rocks that surround them, by the shallowness of the sea, and by the herbs and roots that grow under the waters, that they have formerly been a part of the continent. The gulphs of Eubæa, Chalcis, Argos, Corinth, Actium, and Messena, are all so many marks of the incroachments of the sea. The immense beds of sea shells that are met with in the mountains surrounding the famous valley of Tempe, are the visible effects of an ancient inundation; and the deluges of Ogyges and Deucalion, which have given rise to so many fables, are nevertheless founded on truth. It was probably owing to these

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causes that the Greeks were so late in their improvements. These great revolutions might perhaps immerse them again in barbarism, at a time when the nations of Asia and Egypt were in a flourishing state.

I leave it to persons of greater learning than myself, to prove that the three sons of Noah, who were the only persons in the world, divided it amongst themselves, and went two or three thousand leagues from each other, in order to establish a powerful empire; that Javan, the grandson of Noah, peopled Greece in his way to Italy; that for this reason the Greeks called themselves Ionians, because Ion sent colonies to the coasts of Asia Minor; and that this Ion is evidently Javan, by changing *I* into *Ja*, and *on* into *van*. Such tales as these are related to children, but even children do not believe them.

“Nec pueri credunt nisi qui nondum ære lavantur.”

The deluge of Ogyges is commonly supposed to have happened about twelve hundred years before the first Olympiad. The first who mentions it is Acesilas who is quoted by Eusebius. We are told that Greece remained a desert upwards of two hundred years after this irruption of the sea into the country. Yet it is said that at the same time, there was a government established at Sicyon and at Argos; we are even told the names of the chief magistrates of those little provinces, who had the title of *Basileis*, which is equal to that of princes with us. Do not let us lose our time however, in penetrating these useless obscurities.

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There was another inundation at the time of Deucalion the son of Prometheus. The fabulous account of this second deluge informs us, that Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha, were the only persons that survived it, and that they repaired mankind by casting stones over their shoulders. In this manner the world was repopled much sooner than a warren would have been.

If we may venture to give credit to very judicious writers, such as Petau the Jesuit, a single son of Noah produced a race, which at the end of two hundred and eighty-five years, amounted to 623,612,000,000 persons. The calculation seems rather extravagant. We are at present so unfortunate, that of twenty-six marriages, there is seldom more than four that produce children who live to be fathers. This calculation is founded on the registers that have been kept in our largest cities. Of a thousand children born in the same year, there are hardly six hundred living at the end of twenty years. We should therefore be as suspicious of Petau and other writers of his cast, who get children by a dash of their pen, as we are of those who pretend that Deucalion and Pyrrha repopled Greece by changing stones into the human species.

Greece, as is well known, was the country of fables, and almost every fable gave rise to some particular kind of worship, to a temple and a public festival. What excess of folly and absurd obstinacy can have induced so many compilers to attempt to prove, in such a number of enormous volumes, that a public festival instituted in remembrance of any event, is a sufficient demonstration of the truth of such event? What, because in their temples they celebrated young
Bacchus

Bacchus issuing from Jupiter's thigh, are we to believe that Jupiter really did sew him into his thigh? Or are we to suppose that Cadmus and his wife were changed into serpents in Bœotia, because the Bœotians commemorated such an adventure in their ceremonies? Was the temple of Castor and Pollux at Rome, a proof that those gods came to fight in favour of the Romans?

Be assured rather, when you see an ancient ceremony, or an ancient temple, that they are the works of error. This error gains credit at the end of two or three centuries; at length it becomes sacred, and mankind erect temples to chimeras.

In historical times, on the contrary, the most noble truths meet with few followers; the greatest men die unnoticed. Themistocles, Cimon, Miltiades, Aristides and Phocion were persecuted, while Perseus, Bacchus and other fantastical personages had temples erected to them.

We may venture to believe a people in what they say of themselves to their disadvantage, when their account has the appearance of probability, and is in no respect repugnant to the ordinary course of nature.

The Athenians, who were situated in a very barren country inform us themselves, that an Egyptian named Cecrops, who had been driven out of his own country, was the first that gave them laws. This appears strange, as the Egyptians were not a maritime people: perhaps the Phœnicians, who traded with all countries, might convey this Cecrops into Attica. It is certain however, that the Greeks did not adopt the Egyptian letters. They were indebted to the Phœnicians for their first alphabet, which consisted

list of sixteen characters. The Phœnicians afterwards added eight other letters, which were likewise adopted by the Greeks.

I consider an alphabet as an indisputable monument of the country from which a nation derived the rudiments of its knowledge. It is likewise very probable, that the Phœnicians were the first who worked the silver mines of Attica, in the same manner as they did those of Spain. Thus a trading people were the first masters of those very Greeks, who afterwards instructed so many other nations.

These people, barbarous as they were at the time of Ogyges, seem to have been born with organs more favourable to the fine arts than the people of any other country. They naturally possessed an inexpressible somewhat more delicate and acute; their language is a proof of this; for before they were even acquainted with the art of writing, we find their language affording an harmonious mixture of soft consonants, and of vowels which no other people of Asia were ever acquainted with.

Certainly the word *Knath*, which according to Sanchoniathon signifies the Phœnicians, is not so harmonious as *Hellenos* or *Graios*. Argos, Athens, Lacedæmon, Olympia, sound better to the ear than the city of Reheboth. *Sophia*, wisdom, is much softer than *Shochemath* in Syriac and Hebrew, *Basileus*, king, sounds better than *Melk* or *Shak*. Compare the names of *Agamemnon*, *Diomedes* and *Idomeneus*, with those of *Mardokempad*, *Simordak*, *Sohasduck* and *Niricassolaksar*. Josephus himself, in his book against Appion, acknowledges that the Greeks could not pronounce the barbarous name of Jerusalem, which the Jews

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pronounced

pronounced *Hershalaim* : this word excoriated the throat of an Athenian ; and it was the Greeks who changed *Hershalaim* into *Jerusalem*.

The Greeks likewise changed all the barbarous names of the Syrians, Persians and Egyptians. Of *Coresh* they made *Cyrus* ; of *Isheib* and *Oshireth* they made *Isis* and *Osiris* ; *Moph* they transformed into *Memphis*, and at length they accustomed the barbarians to pronounce as they did, so that at the time of the Ptolemies, the cities and gods of Egypt were known only by Greek names.

It was the Greeks that first made use of the names *Indus* and *Ganges* ; for in the language of the ancient Bramins, the Ganges was called *Sannoubi*, and the Indus *Sombadipo* : these are the names we find in the Vedam.

The Greeks, as they extended along the coasts of Asia Minor, carried harmony along with them. Their Homer was probably born at Smyrna. Beautiful architecture, exquisite sculpture, painting, good music, genuine poetry, true eloquence, the manner of writing history well, and, in a word, even philosophy itself though obscure and imperfect, were all derived by different nations from the Greeks. The last comers excelled their masters in every thing.

The Egyptians had never any beautiful statues but from the hands of the Greeks. Ancient Balbeck in Syria, and Palmyra in Arabia had no palaces, no regular and magnificent temples till the sovereigns of those countries procured Grecian artists. The ruins of Persepolis, which was built by the Persians, afford only the marks of ancient barbarism, while the monuments of Balbeck and Palmyra, even in their present decayed state, are master-pieces of architecture.

Of

*Of the Greek Legislators.—Of Minos.—Of Orpheus.
—Of the Immortality of the Soul.*

LET our compilers describe the battles of Marathon and Salamina, these are great exploits that are sufficiently known; or let them assert that Kittim, one of Noah's grandsons, was king of Macedon, because in the first book of Macca-bees it is said that Alexander came out of the land of Kittim; I shall confine myself to other objects.

Minos lived nearly at the time at which we place Moses; and this has furnished the learned Huet, bishop of Avranches, with a groundless pretext for supposing that Minos who was born in Crete, and Moses who was born on the confines of Egypt, were one and the same person; a system which, absurd as it is, has met with no supporters.

The existence of Minos is not to be ranked with the Greek fables; it is certain he was a king and legislator. The famous Parian inscriptions, the most valuable monument of antiquity, and for which we are indebted to the English, fix his birth fourteen hundred and eighty-two years before our vulgar æra. Homer, in his *Odyssey*, styles him, "The sage who was the confidant of God." Flavius Josephus does not hesitate to say that he received his laws from a god. This is a little strange in a Jew, who one would think ought not to have admitted any other god than his own, unless he thought as his masters the Romans; and as all the most ancient nations did, who allowed the existence of all the deities of other nations.

It is obvious that Minos was a very severe legislator, since he was supposed after his death to judge the souls of the dead in hell; this proves at the same time that the belief of a future state, was generally adopted in a considerable part of Asia and Europe.

Orpheus is a real personage as well as Minos; it is true that the Parian inscriptions do not mention him, and probably this is because he was not born in Greece properly so called, but in Thrace. Some persons have doubted the existence of the first Orpheus, upon the strength of a passage in Cicero's excellent book on the Nature of the Gods. Cotta, one of the interlocutors, pretends that Aristotle did not believe that this Orpheus was ever among the Greeks; but Aristotle does not mention him in any of his works that are extant, nor are we to suppose that Cotta's opinion is that of Cicero. An hundred ancient authors speak of Orpheus. The mysteries that bear his name are testimonies in favour of his existence. Pausanias, the most accurate of all the Greek writers, says, that his verses were chanted in religious ceremonies, in preference to those of Homer who did not live till long after him. We well know that he did not go down to hell; but even this fable proves that hell was an article of the theology of those remote times.

The vague notion of the permanence of the soul after death, of its being the shadow of the body, unknown and incomprehensible although existing, together with the belief of rewards and punishments after death were admitted throughout Greece, in the islands, in Asia and in Egypt.

The Jews seem to have been the only people who were altogether ignorant of this mystery;
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the book of their laws does not say a single word concerning it; we there read only of temporal rewards and punishments. In Exodus it is said, "Honour thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land, which *Adonai* giveth thee," whereas in the Zend we read, "Honour thy father and thy mother that thou may'st deserve heaven."

Bishop Warburton, who has proved that the Pentateuch makes no mention of the immortality of the soul, pretends that this dogma was unnecessary in a theocracy. Arnauld, in his Apology, expresses himself in the following words: "It is the height of ignorance to doubt this truth, which is so common and which is attested by all the fathers, that the promises contained in the Old Testament were only temporal and terrestrial, and that the Jews adored God only for the sake of earthly benefits."

It has been objected that if the Persians, Arabians, Syrians, Indians, Egyptians and Greeks believed the immortality of the soul, a life to come, and eternal rewards and punishments, the Jews might believe them also; that if all the ancient legislators established wise laws on this foundation, Moses might likewise do the same; that if he was ignorant of these useful dogmas he was unworthy of conducting a nation, and if he did know them, but concealed them, he was equally unworthy.

To these arguments it has been replied, that God, who spake through Moses, condescended to adapt himself to the ignorance of the Jews. I shall not attempt to discuss this intricate question, and as I respect every thing that is divine,
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I shall continue my inquiry into the history of men.

Of the Greek Sects.

IT seems that among the Egyptians, the Persians, the Chaldeans and the Indians, there was only one sect of philosophers. The priests of all those nations were of a particular race, and what was called *wisdom* belonged only to them. Their sacred language, which was unknown to the vulgar, gave them the sole possession of science. But in Greece, which was a country of more happiness and freedom, the road to knowledge was open to every body; every individual gave a full scope to his ideas, and it was this that rendered the Greeks the most ingenious people upon earth. In the same manner, the English, within our time, are become the most enlightened nation, because they have full liberty to think.

The Stoics admired an universal soul of the world, into which they supposed that the souls of all living creatures returned. The Epicureans, on the contrary, denied the existence of a soul, and admitted only physical principles. They contended that the gods did not interfere with the affairs of men; and these Epicureans were suffered to live in peace.

From the time of Thales to that of Plato and Aristotle, the schools were engaged in philosophical disputes, which evince the sagacity and the folly of the human understanding, as well as its sublimity and weakness. They argued almost always, without comprehending what they said, in the same manner as we have done ever since the thirteenth century, when we began to reason.

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The reputation that Plato acquired does not surprize me; all the philosophers were unintelligible; he was as much so as the rest, but he expressed himself with more eloquence. But what success would Plato have, were he to appear in the present age in a company of sensible people, and to express himself in the same manner he has done in his *Timæus*, where he has the following words: "Of the substance indivisible and divisible, God composed a third kind of substance between the two, partaking of the nature of *the same and of the other*; then taking these three natures together, he mixed them all into one form, and forced the nature of the soul to mix itself with the nature of *the same*; and having mixed them with the substance, and of these three, having made a body, he divided it into suitable portions; each of these portions being mixed with *the same and the other*; and of the substance he made his division."

He then explains with the same clearness, the quaternary of Pythagoras. We must confess that any man of sense who had just read Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, would request Plato to go to his school.

Notwithstanding this jargon of the good Plato, we every now and then meet with beautiful ideas in his works. The Greeks had so much genius, that they abused it. But to their honour be it spoken, none of their governments ever attempted to hinder men from thinking. Socrates was the only one amongst them, whose opinions cost him his life; but he was rather the victim of a violent party than of his opinions. The Athenians it is true made him drink hemlock, but it is well known how they afterwards repented, and how

how they punished his accusers, and erected a temple to the man they had condemned. The Athenians allowed full liberty, not only to philosophy, but to every kind of religion. They admitted all strange gods, and even had an altar dedicated to the unknown gods.

It is indisputable that the Greeks acknowledged a supreme God, as well as all the other nations of which we have been speaking. Their *Zeus*, their *Jupiter*, was the master of gods and men. This opinion never varied from the time of Orpheus; we meet with it an hundred times in Homer; all the other gods are inferior deities. We may compare them to the *Peris* of the Persians, and to the *Genii* of other oriental nations. All the philosophers, if we except the *Stratonicians* and *Epicureans*, acknowledged the *Demiourgos*, or architect of the world.

We cannot dwell too long upon this great historical truth, that in the first dawn of human reason, mankind adored some power, some being whom they considered as superior to ordinary powers, and hence were led to worship the sun, the moon or the stars; that when this same reason came to be more cultivated, mankind, notwithstanding all their errors, adored a supreme God, master of the elements and of the other gods, and that in general, all the civilized nations from India, to the very heart of Europe, believed in a life to come, although several philosophical sects entertained a contrary opinion.

Of Zaleucus and some other Legislators.

I HERE venture to defy all the moralists, and all the legislators, and I ask them all whether they

they have ever said any thing more beautiful or more useful than the exordium to the laws of Zaleucus, a sage who lived before the time of Pythagoras, and was the first magistrate of the Locrians.

“ Every one ought to be convinced of the existence of the divinity. It is sufficient to observe the order and harmony of the universe, to be persuaded that it cannot have been the work of chance. We ought to govern our soul, to purify it, and guard it against evil, and to be convinced that God cannot be well served by the wicked, and that he resembles not those miserable mortals who suffer themselves to be influenced by magnificent ceremonies and sumptuous offerings. Virtue alone, and an uniform disposition to do good, can be acceptable to him. Let mankind therefore study to be just in their principles and practice, and by these means they will render themselves dear to the divinity. Every one ought to fear that which leads to ignominy, much more than that which leads to poverty. We ought to consider him as the best citizen, who prefers justice to riches; but they whom their violent passions impel towards evil, whether men or women, ought to be admonished to remember the gods, and to meditate frequently on the severe judgments these employ against the guilty; they ought to have before their eyes the hour of death, that fatal hour which awaits us all, that hour in which the recollection of our faults will bring with it remorse, and a vain repentance of not having guided all our actions by equity.

“ Every one therefore ought to conduct himself in every moment of his life, as if that

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“ moment was his last; but if his evil genius
 “ leads him to the commission of crimes, let
 “ him fly to the feet of the altar, let him pray to
 “ heaven to remove this evil genius, let him above
 “ all throw himself into the arms of good men,
 “ whose counsels may bring him back to virtue,
 “ by representing to him the goodness of God,
 “ and his disposition to punish evil-doers.”

No, there is not in all antiquity any thing preferable to these simple and sublime expressions, which are dictated by reason and virtue, and deprived of that enthusiasm, and of those uncouth figures which are disgusting to sensible readers.

Charondas, who was a follower of Zaleucus, expressed himself in the same manner. The Plato's, the Cicero's, the divine Antoninuses afterward adopted the same language. It is in this way likewise, that Julian expresses himself in an hundred passages of his works; Julian, who had the misfortune to abandon the Christian religion, but who did so much honour to the religion of nature; he who was the disgrace of our church, and the glory of the Roman empire.

“ We ought, says he, to instruct, and not to
 “ punish the ignorant; to pity, but not to hate
 “ them. The duty of an emperor is to imitate
 “ God; and this imitation consists in having as
 “ few wants, and in doing as much good as possible.” Let those who insult antiquity learn to know it better; let them not confound sage legislators with the inventors of fables; let them learn to distinguish between the laws of wise and prudent magistrates, and the ridiculous customs of the vulgar; let them not suppose, that because superstitious ceremonies, prodigies and false oracles were tolerated by the magistrates of Greece
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and Rome, these magistrates were either ignorant or deceitful; this would be the same thing as if we were to say, that because there are bonzes in China, who deceive the populace, the sage Confucius was a miserable impostor.

In an enlightened age like the present, we ought to blush at the abuse which ignorant writers have employed against those sages of antiquity, whom, instead of calumniating, we ought to imitate. We all know that the vulgar of every country are weak, ignorant and superstitious. Has not the same country that produced the chancellor de L'Hopital, Charon, Montaigne, La Motte le Vayer, Descartes, Bayle, Fontenelle and Montesquieu, abounded with fanatics of every kind? Are there not Methodists, Moravians, Millenarians, and every other superstitious sect in the country that has had the happiness to give birth to the lord chancellor Bacon, to the immortal Newton and Locke, and to a multitude of great men?

Of B A C C H U S.

IF we except the fables that are evidently allegorical, such as those of the Muses, Venus, the Graces, Cupid, Zephyrus and Flora, and some others of the same kind, all the rest are a collection of tales which have no other merit than that of having furnished Ovid and Quinault* with some fine verses, and of having employed the pencil of our best painters; there is one however, that seems to merit the attention of those who

* A celebrated French poet, who died in 1688. T.

are fond of researches into antiquity, and that is the fable of Bacchus.

This Bacchus, or Bach, or Backos, or Dionysios, son of god, was he a real personage? So many nations speak of him as well as of Hercules, and so many different Bacchusses, as well as Herculeesses, have been celebrated, that we may reasonably suppose the one as well as the other to have existed.

Of this we are certain, that in Egypt, in Asia, and in Greece, Bacchus, as well as Hercules, was acknowledged for a demi-god, that they celebrated their festivals, and attributed miracles to them; and that mysteries were instituted in the name of Bacchus, long before the Jewish books were known.

It is well known that the Jews did not communicate their books to strangers, till the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, about two hundred and thirty years before our æra. Now, before that time, the orgies of Bacchus were well known both in the east and west. The verses attributed to the ancient Orpheus, celebrate the conquests and the virtues of this pretended demi-god. His history is so ancient, that the fathers of the church have pretended that Bacchus was Noah, because Bacchus and Noah are both said to have cultivated the vine.

Herodotus, in relating ancient opinions, says, that Bacchus was an Egyptian, educated in Arabia Felix. The Orphean verses say, that he was saved from the waters in a little box, that he was called *Misem*, in remembrance of this adventure, that he was instructed in the secrets of the gods, that he had a rod which he could change into a serpent whenever he pleased, that he passed
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through the red sea dry shod, in the same manner as Hercules afterwards passed the streight between Calpe and Abyla^{*}; that when he went into India, he and his army enjoyed the light of the sun during the night, that he touched the waters of the Orontes and the Hydaspes with his hand, and they afforded him a free passage. It is even said that he stopped the course of the sun and moon. He was anciently represented with horns, or with rays surrounding his head.

After all this, it is by no means strange that several learned men, and especially Bochart and Huet of late years, have pretended that Bacchus is a copy of Moses and Joshua. Every thing concurs to favour the resemblance: for among the Egyptians, Bacchus was called *Arfaph*, and among the names which the fathers have given Moses, we find that of *Osafirph*.

In regard to these two histories, which resemble each other in so many points, there can be no doubt but that of Moses is true, and that of Bacchus fabulous. But it seems that this fable was known to different nations, long before they were acquainted with the history of Moses. Longinus, who lived under the emperor Aurelian, is the first Greek author that quotes Moses, and they had all celebrated Bacchus.

It seems incontestable, that the Greeks could not take their idea of Bacchus from the books of the Jewish law, which they did not understand, and of which they had not the least knowledge; a book, by the bye, which was so rare even

^{*} These are the names of two hills; Calpe is on the Spanish side of the streights of Gibraltar, and Abyla on the Barbary side. These are now called Hercules's Pillars. T.

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among the Jews themselves, that in the reign of Josiah there was only one copy of it to be found; it was almost entirely lost during the slavery of the Jews in Chaldæa and other parts of Asia, and was at length restored by Eldras, at a time when Athens and the other republics of Greece were in a flourishing state: but the mysteries of Bacchus were instituted before that time.

It therefore pleased God to permit the spirit of falsehood to divulge the absurdities of the life of Bacchus to an hundred nations, before the spirit of truth made known the life of Moses to any people except the Jews.

Huet, the learned bishop of Avranches, struck with this wonderful resemblance, does not hesitate to pronounce that Moses was not only Bacchus, but likewise the *Thaut*, the *Osiris* of the Egyptians. He even adds *, that he was also their *Typhon*, that is to say, that he was at once their good and their bad principle, their protector and their enemy, the acknowledged god and devil of Egypt.

Moses, according to this learned writer, is the same as Zoroaster. He is Esculapius, Amphion, Apollo, Faunus, Janus, Perseus, Romulus, Vertumnus, and even Adonis and Priapus. The proof that he was Adonis, is drawn from Virgil, who says :

Et formosus oves ad flumina pavit Adonis.

And the beautiful Adonis was a keeper of sheep.

Moses likewise kept sheep on the confines of Arabia. The proof that he was Priapus is still bet-

* Proposition IV. page 79 and 87. V.

ter: it is said that Priapus was sometimes represented with an afs, and that the Jews were said to adore an afs. Huet's last proof is from the rod of Moses, which he thinks may very properly be compared to the sceptre of Priapus*.

Sceptrum Priapo tribuitur, virga Mosi.

This is what Huet calls his demonstration. It is indeed not geometrical, and it is probable that he was ashamed of it in the latter years of his life, and that he recollected his demonstration when he composed his treatise on the Weakness of the Human Mind, and the Uncertainty of Human Knowledge.

Of the Greek Metamorphoses collected by Ovid.

THE belief of the transmigration of souls, naturally leads to the belief of metamorphoses. Every idea that strikes and amuses the imagination is soon universally adopted by the vulgar. When you have persuaded me that my soul can enter into the body of a horse, you will have no difficulty in making me believe that my body also may be changed into the same animal.

The metamorphoses collected by Ovid, would not appear at all wonderful to a Pythagorean, a Bramin, a Chaldæan or an Egyptian. The gods had changed themselves into animals in ancient Egypt. Derceto had assumed the shape of a fish in Syria; Semiramis had been changed into a pigeon in Babylon. The Jews, in much later times, assure us, that Nebuchadnezzar was changed

* Huet, page 110. V.

into an ox; without reckoning Lot's wife, who was transformed into a pillar of salt. Are not all the apparitions of gods and genii under the human form to be considered likewise as real, tho' transient metamorphoses? a god can hardly have any intercourse with us, unless he assumes the human shape. It is true, that Jupiter metamorphosed himself into a fine swan, for the sake of enjoying Leda. But such instances are rare, and in all religions, we find the gods assuming the human figure, when they come to deliver their orders. It would be difficult to understand their voice, if they appeared as bears and crocodiles.

In short, the gods metamorphosed themselves almost in every country; and no sooner had mankind a notion of magic, than they metamorphosed themselves. Several persons worthy of credit changed themselves into wolves. What makes all these transactions and prodigies so easily believed, is, that it is impossible to prove their impossibility. How can we contradict a man who comes to us and says, "A god came yesterday to my house, in the shape of a handsome young man, and nine months hence, my daughter will be delivered of a beautiful child that the god has condescended to beget. My brother, who had the boldness to doubt this has been changed into a wolf, and is at this moment running about in the woods." If the girl is really brought to bed, and the man who was changed into a wolf, assures you that he has indeed experienced such a metamorphosis, you cannot demonstrate the falsity or impossibility of the thing. All you can do, will be to summon before a magistrate, the young man who had acted
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the part of the god, and got the young lady with child, and to take care that the wolvisſh uncle is narrowly watched, ſo that the impoſture may be properly authenticated. But the family will not expoſe themſelves to ſuch an inquiry; they will maintain with the prieſts in the neighbourhood, that you are a profane and ignorant wretch; they will tell you, that as a caterpillar is changed into a butterfly, ſo a man may be as eaſily transformed into a beaſt; and if you diſpute the truth of this, they will accuſe you before the inquiſition of the country, as an impious perſon, who neither believe that men can be changed into wolves, nor that girls can be got with child by the gods.

Of I D O L A T R Y.

AFTER reading every thing that has been written on idolatry, we find nothing that gives us a precise notion of it. Locke ſeems to have been the firſt who taught mankind to define the words they pronounce, without ſpeaking at random. There is no term equivalent to idolatry in any of the ancient languages. It is an expreſſion of the Greeks of the latter ages, and was never uſed before the ſecond century of our æra. It ſignifies the adoration of images, and is a term of reproach and ignominy. Never did any people pretend to be idolaters, nor did ever any government authoriſe the adoration of an image as the ſupreme God of nature. The ancient Chaldæans, the ancient Arabians, the ancient Perſians had, for a long time neither images nor temples. How could thoſe be called idolaters, who revered in the ſun, in the ſtars, and in fire, the emblems of the divinity? They adored what they ſaw.

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But certainly the revering the sun and the stars, was not like adoring a figure carved in stone by the hands of a workman; their worship was erroneous, but not idolatrous.

Supposing that the Egyptians really adored the dog Anubis, and the ox Apis, and that they were not only so weak as not to consider them as animals consecrated to the divinity, and as emblems of the services their *Isbeth* or *Isis* had rendered mankind, but even to believe that this dog and this ox were animated by a ray from heaven; yet it is clear that this was not like paying adoration to a statue. A beast is not an idol.

There can be no doubt that mankind had objects of worship, before they had sculptors, and therefore, cannot be said to have been idolaters in those remote times. But it may be asked, perhaps, whether those who afterwards caused statues to be placed in the temples, and those statues to be revered, stiled themselves and their people worshippers of statues? There is certainly no monument of antiquity that proves this to have been the case.

But whatever they might stile themselves, were they in fact idolaters? Were they taught to believe that the statue of bronze which represented the fantastical figure of Bel at Babylon, was the master, the God and the creator of the world? Was the figure of Jupiter supposed to be Jupiter himself? Is it not, if we may be permitted to compare the customs of our holy religion with those of the ancients, is it not the same thing as if we were to say that we adore the figure of God the father with a long beard, the figures of a woman and a child, or the figure of a pigeon? All these are emblematical ornaments in our churches. We are so far from adoring them, that when these statues are of wood,
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and become rotten, we light our fires with them and make new ones. They are objects that are merely intended to strike the eye and the imagination. The Turks and the protestants consider the catholics as idolaters, but the catholics deny the justness of this reproach.

It is not possible that any man can adore a statue, or believe that this statue is the supreme God. There was only one Jupiter, but there were a thousand of his statues. This Jupiter, who was supposed to wield the thunder, was thought to dwell in the clouds, or upon Mount Olympus, or in the planet that bears his name. His statues neither darted thunderbolts, nor could be either in a planet, in the clouds, or on Olympus. All prayers were addressed to the immortal gods, and certainly the statues were not immortal.

There were impostors, it is true, who made believe, and superstitious persons who believed; that some of these statues had spoken. But have not our common people been oftentimes equally credulous? Never among any nation were such absurdities considered as the religion of the state. Some stupid old women perhaps may have made no distinction between the statue and the god, but this is no reason for affirming that the government thought as this old woman did. The magistrates were desirous that the people should reverence the figures of the gods whom they adored, and that their imagination should be fixed by these visible signs. This is exactly what is done at present throughout the half of Europe. In our churches we have figures that represent God the father under the form of an old man, and yet we well know that God is not an old man. We have likewise the images of several of the

saints whom we venerate, and we know that these saints are not God the father.

In the same manner, if we may venture to say it, the ancients knew how to distinguish between their demi-gods, their gods, and the master of the gods. If those ancients were idolaters, because they had statues in their temples, the half of christendom is equally idolatrous.

In a word, there is not in all antiquity a single poet, a single philosopher, a single statesman, who has said that they adored either stone, marble, bronze, or wood. The proofs to the contrary are innumerable: the idolatrous nations are therefore like the forcerers, they have been spoken of, but never existed.

A commentator has concluded that the ancients really adored the statue of Priapus, because Horace puts the following words into the mouth of this deity:

Olim truncus eram ficulnus, inutile lignum :
Quum faber, incertus scamnum faceretne Priapum,
Maluit esse deum *. —————

The commentator quotes the prophet Baruch, to prove that at the time of Horace, the figure of Priapus was considered as a real divinity. He does not seem to perceive that Horace is ridiculing both the pretended god and his statues. It is possible, that one of his maid servants, when

* In days of yore our godship stood,
A very worthless log of wood.
The joiner doubting, or to shape us
Into a stool, or a Priapus,
At length resolv'd, for reasons wise,
Into a god to bid me rise.

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she saw this enormous figure, might believe there was something divine in it: but assuredly, all these wooden Priapusses with which the gardens were filled, by way of scare-crows, were not considered as the creators of the world.

It is said that Moses, in spite of the divine law which forbade the making any figures resembling men or animals, erected a serpent of brass, which was an imitation of the serpent of silver that the Egyptian priests used to carry in procession; but altho' this serpent was made to cure the venomous bite of real serpents, yet it was never adored. Solomon placed two cherubs in the temple, but these cherubs were not considered as gods. If therefore, in the temple of the Jews, and in our own churches, statues have been respected without any mixture of idolatry, why should we so greatly reproach other nations? We either ought to absolve them, or they ought to accuse us.

Of O R A C L E S.

IT is evident that we cannot foretel what is to come, because we cannot possibly know that which is not; at the same time it is clear that we may conjecture an event.

You see a numerous and well-disciplined army, commanded by an experienced general, advancing to an advantageous spot, and opposed to an imprudent leader, who is at the head only of a few disaffected troops, badly armed, and injudiciously posted. You predict that the latter will be defeated.

You have observed that a certain young man and woman love each other tenderly; you have often seen them together; you venture to foretel that the girl will very soon become pregnant,

nant, and it is likely that you will not be mistaken in this. All predictions depend on the calculation of probabilities. The most celebrated is that which the traitorous Flavius Josephus, made in favour of Vespasian and his son Titus, the conquerors of the Jews. He saw that Vespasian and Titus were adored by the Roman armies in the East, while Nero was detested by the whole empire. In order therefore to obtain the good graces of Vespasian, he ventured to assure him, in the name of the God of the Jews *, that he and his son would be emperors. They were so in fact; but it is evident that Josephus risked nothing. He well knew that if Vespasian should fail in his attempts to obtain the empire, he would not be in a condition to punish him; that if he came to be emperor, he would reward him, and that so long as he did not reign, he would be in hopes of reigning. Vespasian makes this Josephus say, that if he is a prophet he ought to have foretold the taking of Jotapat, which he had in vain defended against the Roman army. Josephus in answer to this, says, that he had really predicted it; nor is this at all surprizing, for where is the governor of a small town, who in maintaining a siege against a large army, would not foretel that the place would be taken?

It was by no means difficult to perceive that by acting the prophet, it was easy to gain the respect and the money of the multitude, and that whosoever would be at the pains to deceive the vulgar would be amply repaid by their credulity. Every country had its soothsayers, who finding it not sufficient to predict in their own names,

* Josephus, book iii. chap. 28.

soon accustomed themselves to speak in the name of the Deity; and from the time of the Egyptian prophets, who called themselves *seers*, to that of Ulpian under the emperor Adrian, there was a prodigious number of sacred quacks, who imposed upon mankind in the name of the gods. We may easily imagine how they conducted themselves, sometimes by delivering an ambiguous answer, which they afterwards explained as they pleased, at others by corrupting the servants of families, and sometimes by secretly informing themselves of the adventures of the devotees who came to consult them. An idiot was astonished when one of these imposters told him, in the name of God, the most secret things he had been guilty of. —

These prophets had the reputation of knowing things past, present and to come; such is the eulogy Homer bestows on Calchas. I shall add nothing here to what the learned Vandale, and his judicious editor, Fontenelle, have said concerning oracles. They have very sagaciously displayed whole ages of imposture; and the Jesuit Balthus has shewn but very little sense, or rather much malignity, by maintaining in opposition to those writers, the truth of the Pagan oracles by arguments founded on the principles of Christianity. It is really an injustice to the Deity, to suppose that this God of goodness and truth would suffer the devils of hell to come upon earth, to deliver oracles, and thus to do what he himself does not do.

Either these devils spoke the truth, and in this case it was impossible not to believe them; and God himself suffering all the false religions to be supported by daily miracles, thus allowed
the

34 PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE.

the whole world to be in the possession of his enemies: or they spoke falsely, and in this case God may be said, to have let the devils loose in order to deceive mankind. Upon the whole, there never perhaps was a more absurd opinion.

The most famous oracle was that of Delphos. At first they made use of young innocent girls, as being the fittest persons to be inspired, or in other words to deliver the jargon dictated to them by the priests. The young Pythia was mounted upon a tripod, placed over a hole from which issued the prophetic exhalation. The divine spirit passed under the robe of the young priestess to a certain spot; but one of these beautiful young Pythiæ having been carried off by some devout person, they afterwards made use of old women for this purpose; and I believe this was one reason why the Delphian oracle began to decline in reputation.

Divinations and augurations were a kind of oracles, and are I believe of much higher antiquity; for much time and many ceremonies were requisite to get a divine oracle into vogue, nor could it be carried on without a temple and priests, whereas nothing could be easier than to tell fortunes in the highway. This art was subdivided into a thousand forms; they predicted by the flight of birds, by the liver of sheep, by the lines in the palm of the hand, by circles marked out upon the ground, by fire, by water, by small pebbles, by wands, in short by every thing they could think of, and sometimes merely through enthusiasm without adhering to any rules. But who was the first inventor of this art? The first impostor who met with men weak enough to believe him.

The predictions were for the most part like those we meet with in the almanack of Liege*, as for instance, *a great man will die,—there will be shipwrecks*. If a village magistrate happens to die in the course of the year, the whole village consider him as the great man whose death was foretold. If a fisherman's boat is lost at sea, this is supposed to be the great shipwreck. The author of the almanack of Liege is a wizard, whether his predictions are accomplished or not; for if any event happens to favour them, his magic is demonstrated; but if the things he foretells do not take place, his predictions are applied to something else, and are supposed to be allegorical.

The almanack of Liege once said, that a people would come from the North and destroy every thing; these people did not come however, but a cold north wind came, and destroyed some of our vines, and every body supposed this to be what Matthew Lansberge, the editor of the almanack, had predicted. If any one ventures to doubt his knowledge, the whole society of hawkers rail at such a person as a dangerous subject, and the astrologers consider him as a man of no genius and a bad reasoner.

The Sunnites among the Mahometans have adopted a similar method in explaining the Koran. The star *Aldebaran* was held in high veneration by the Arabians; it signifies the eye of the bull,

* The almanack of Liege is the most absurd and the most popular of all the almanacks upon the continent. It is in so much vogue in France, that upwards of twenty thousand copies are sent every year from Liege to Paris. This may account for M. de Voltaire's treating it with so much ridicule. T.

and they supposed this to imply that the eye of Mahomet would enlighten the Arabians, and that like a bull he would strike his enemies with his horns.

The tree acacia was greatly esteemed in Arabia; they made thick hedges of it which preserved their corn from the heat of the sun; and Mahomet is the acacia which is to cover the whole earth with its salutary shade. The most sensible Turks smile at these absurdities; the young women do not think about them; the old devotees believe them; and any one who should say publicly to a dervise, that he teaches absurdities would be in danger of being put to death. There have been some learned men who have discovered the history of their own times in the Iliad and the Odyssey; but these persons have not been so successful as the commentators on the Alcoran.

The most brilliant function of the oracles was to assure success in war. Each army, each nation had its oracles which promised it triumphs. One of the two parties must infallibly have received a true oracle. They who were conquered, and of course had been deceived, attributed their defeat to some fault committed towards the gods after the oracle had been delivered; and therefore hoped that at another time the oracle would be fulfilled. In this manner almost all the world has been imposed upon. There was hardly a nation that did not preserve in their archives, or by oral tradition, some prediction that promised they should conquer the world, that is to say, the neighbouring nations; the moment a conquest was effected, it was discovered to have been foretold long before. Even the Jews, confined
as

as they were to a little spot of earth, almost unknown to the rest of the world, between Anti-Libanus, Arabia Deserta, and Arabia Petræa, entertained hopes as well as other nations, of becoming masters of the universe; and these hopes were founded on a thousand oracles which we explain in a mystic, but which they understood in a literal sense.

Of the Sibyls among the Greeks, and of their Influence on other Nations.

WHEN almost all the world was filled with oracles, there were certain old maids who without belonging to any temple, took it into their heads to prophecy upon their own account. They were called *Sibyls*, a Greek word of the Laconic dialect, which signifies *counsel of God*. The ancients reckoned ten principal Sibyls in different countries. Every body knows the story of the good woman, who came to Tarquinius Priscus in Rome, and brought with her nine books of the ancient Cumæan Sibyl. As Tarquinius cheapened them too much, the old woman threw the six first books into the fire, and required as much money for the remaining three, as she had at first asked for the whole. Tarquin purchased them, and we are told they were preserved in Rome till the time of Sylla, when they were consumed in the fire of the capitol.

But as it was thought impossible to do without the Sibylline prophecies, three senators were dispatched to Erythræ, a city of Greece, where a thousand indifferent Greek verses were carefully preserved and considered as the predictions of the Erythræan Sibyl. Every one was for pro-

curing copies of these. The Erythræan Sibyl had predicted every thing. It was with her prophecies as it has since been with those of Nostradamus * among us. When any particular event took place, they did not fail to forge some Greek verses, which they attributed to the Sibyl.

Augustus, who with great reason feared that some verses might be found in this rhapsody to authorise conspiracies, prohibited, under pain of death, any Roman from having the Sibylline verses in his possession; a prohibition worthy of a suspicious tyrant, who knew how to preserve a power that had been criminally usurped.

The Sibylline verses were respected more than ever, when people were no longer permitted to read them. The attempt to conceal them from the public eye, was a proof that they contained the truth.

Virgil, in his eclogue on the birth of Marcellus, does not fail to quote the authority of the Cumæan Sibyl, who had clearly predicted that this child, who died soon after, would bring back the golden age †. The Erythræan Sibyl was

* Michael Nostradamus, a French physician, and famous astrologer, who published his predictions in verse, Henry II. and Catharine de Medicis held him in great esteem, and Charles IX. made him his physician in ordinary. He died at Salon in 1566, aged 63. T.

† *Ultima Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas:
Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo.
Jam redit et virgo; redeunt Saturnia regna:
Jam nova progenies coelo demittitur alto.
Tu modo nascenti puero, quo ferrea primum
Desinet, ac toto surget gens aurea mundo,
Casta fave Lucina: tuus jam regnat Apollo.*

VIRG. ECLOG. IV.

The

likewise said to have prophesied at Cuma. The new born child belonging to Augustus, could not fail of having been predicted by the Sibyl. Prophecies never relate to any but great people; little folks are not worth the trouble of them.

These Sibylline oracles having always been in so much vogue, the primitive christians, transported by a false zeal, were induced to forge similar predictions, in order to combat the Gentiles with their own weapons. Hermes and St. Justin are said to have been the first supporters of this imposture. St. Justin quotes the oracles of the Cumæan Sibyl, published by a christian, who had taken the name of Istaphius, and pretended that his Sibyl lived at the time of the deluge. St. Clement of Alexandria in his *Stromates**, assures us, that the apostle St. Paul recommends, in his epistles, "The reading of the Sibyls, who " manifestly predicted the birth of the Son of " God." This epistle of St. Paul must certainly have been lost; for we neither find these words, nor any thing like them, in any of his epistles that have been handed down to us. There were many books in use among the christians of those days that are no longer extant; such as the prophecies of Jaldabath, those of Seth, Enoch and Ham; the re-

The years approach by Sibyls sage foretold,
Again by circling time in order roll'd!
Aistrea comes, old Saturn's holy reign!
Peace, virtue, justice, now returns again!
See a new progeny from heav'n descend!
Lucina hear! th' important birth befriend!
The golden age this infant shall restore,
Thy Phœbus reigns—and vice shall be no more.

PITT.

* Lib. 4.

penitance of Adam; the history of Zacharias, father of St. John; the gospel of the Egyptians; the gospel of St. Peter, St. Andrew and St. James; the gospel of Eve; the revelation of Adam; the letters of Jesus Christ, and an hundred writings, of which there are at present only a few fragments remaining, and these are buried in works that are seldom read.

The christian church was at that time divided into two sects, of Judaists and Non-judaists. These two were subdivided into several others. They who had any talents, wrote in favour of their several societies. Of upwards of fifty gospels that were extant till the time of the council of Nicea, there are at present remaining only those of the *virgin*, the *infancy*, and *Nicodemus*. We have already observed, that spurious verses were attributed to the ancient Sibyls; and in so much respect were these sibylline predictions held by the people, that they were thought to be necessary for the support of christianity. Not only were sibylline verses made, which announced Jesus Christ, but they were written in acrosticks, so that the letters of these words, *Jesous Chreistos ios soter*, were one after the other, the beginning of each verse. It is in these compositions that we meet with the following prediction: "With five
" loaves and two fishes he shall feed five thousand
" persons in the desert, and fill twelve baskets
" with the remnants of the repast."

They did not stop here; they thought it possible to explain the lines we have just now quoted from the fourth eclogue of Virgil, in favour of christianity. This opinion was in such vogue in the first ages of the church, that the emperor Constantine maintained it strenuously. An emperor

peror certainly could not be mistaken, and Virgil was therefore for a long time considered as a prophet. In short, they were so persuaded of the truth of the sibylline oracles, that in one of our hymns, which is not of a very ancient date, we meet with these two remarkable lines:

Solvat sæclum in favilla

Teste David cum Sibylla *.

Among the predictions attributed to the Sibyls, they did not fail to discover the Millennium, the belief of which, the fathers of the church adopted till the time of Theodosius II.

This reign of Jesus Christ, during a thousand years upon earth, was originally founded on a passage in St. Luke, chap. xxi. where he says, "And they shall see the son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory," and adds, "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled." St. Paul likewise, in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, chap. iv. has the following expressions: "This we say unto you, by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep.

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

"Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds,

* He will reduce the world to ashes,
Witness David and the Sibyl,

“ to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we
 “ ever be with the Lord.”

It is very strange that St. Paul should say that the Lord himself had told him this; for Paul so far from having been one of the disciples of Christ, had for a long time been one of his persecutors. At any rate however, the same thing is promised in the 20th chapter of the Revelations, where we are told that the righteous “ Shall
 “ be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign
 “ with him a thousand years.”

The Christians were therefore in continual expectation of the coming of Jesus Christ, to establish his reign, and to rebuild Jerusalem, in which they were to dwell with the patriarchs.

This new Jerusalem was announced in the following passages of the Revelation, “ I John saw
 “ the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down
 “ from God, out of heaven, prepared as a bride
 “ adorned for her husband.—It had a wall
 “ great and high, and twelve gates, and at the
 “ gates twelve angels And the wall of the
 “ city had twelve foundations, and in them were
 “ the names of the twelve apostles of the lamb,
 “ and he that had talked with me, had a golden
 “ reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof,
 “ and the wall thereof. And the city lieth
 “ four-square, and the length is as large as the
 “ breadth: and he measured the city with the
 “ reed, twelve thousand furlongs: the length,
 “ and the breadth, and the height of it are equal.
 “ And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred
 “ and forty and four cubits and the
 “ building of the wall of it was of jasper, and
 “ the city was pure gold, like unto pure glass,
 “ &c.”

The

The christians might have been satisfied with this prediction, but they were desirous also of having the testimony of the Sibyl, and she was therefore made to say nearly the same things. So strongly were people's minds impressed with this notion, that St. Justin, in his dialogue against Triphon, says, "He is convinced that Jesus is to come in this New Jerusalem, to eat and drink with his disciples."

St. Irenæus gave himself up so fully to this opinion, that he attributes the following words to St. John the evangelist: "In the New Jerusalem, each vine shall produce ten thousand branches, and each branch ten thousand bunches, each bunch ten thousand grapes, and each grape five and twenty casks of wine. And when any of the holy vintagers gathers a grape, the next grape will say to him, 'Take me, for I am better than him *.'"

It was not sufficient that the Sibyl had predicted these wonders; there were some who had actually seen them accomplished. Thus, according to Tertullian, the New Jerusalem was seen descending from heaven, during forty nights successively.

Tertullian expresses himself thus †: "We acknowledge that we are promised the reign of a thousand years upon earth, after the resurrection into the city of Jerusalem, which is brought from heaven."

Thus it is, that in all ages, common sense has been perverted by a fondness for the marvellous, and the desire of hearing and saying extraordinary things; and in this manner mankind have employed fraud as a substitute for strength. The

* Iren. chap. xxxv. lib. 5.

† Lib. 3.

christian religion however, was established on so solid and rational a foundation, that none of these errors were able to injure it. By degrees, the pure gold has been separated from this alloy, and the church has attained to the state in which we see it at present.

Of M I R A C L E S.

MANKIND are fond only of the extraordinary, and this is so true, that no sooner is the sublime or beautiful common, than it ceases to be esteemed as such. They are desirous of wonderful things, of every kind, and even of impossibilities. Ancient history may be compared to that of the great cabbage, which was larger than a house, and of the great pot made to boil it in, that was larger than a church.

What idea have we annexed to the word *miracle*, which in fact signifies something admirable? We have accustomed ourselves to say that it is something repugnant to the laws of nature, and which she cannot operate. Thus, the Englishman who engaged to conceal himself in a quart bottle, announced a miracle to the people of London. And formerly, there would not have been wanting legends to confirm the accomplishment of such a prodigy, if any convent could have been benefited by it.

We do not hesitate to believe all the true miracles that have been operated in our holy religion, and among the Jews, whose religion was preparatory to ours. We are speaking here only of other nations, and we are arguing only according to the rules of common sense, humbly submitting

mitting them, however, at all times, to the superior light of revelation.

Any one who is not enlightened by faith, can consider a miracle only as a thing repugnant to the eternal laws of nature. He will not think it possible that God should disorder his own works; he knows that every thing in the universe is connected by a chain that nothing can destroy; he knows that God himself being immutable, his laws are so likewise, and that it is impossible for a single wheel of the great machine to be stopped, without all nature being disordered.

When Jupiter enjoyed Alcmena, he was said to make the night last four and twenty hours instead of twelve; the earth therefore must have stopped in its course, and have remained immovable during twelve hours. But as the same phenomena of the heavens would appear again the night following, it was requisite that the moon and all the planets should likewise be stopped. This was certainly a great revolution in all the heavenly orbs, in favour of a woman who lived at Thebes in Bœotia.

A dead body rises from the grave at the end of a few days: now, in order to accomplish such a resurrection, all the imperceptible particles of the body which had been exhaled into the air, and carried far off by the winds, must necessarily be brought back, each to their proper place; and the worms, and the birds or other animals that have fed upon the corpse, must each restore what they have taken. The worms that have fattened themselves with the entrails of this man, may have been eaten by the swallows, these swallows by hawks, and these hawks by vultures. Each of these must restore precisely what belonged to

the deceased, because without this, it cannot be the same body. And yet all this is nothing, if the soul does not return again to its former dwelling.

If the eternal Being, who has foreseen and arranged every thing, and who governs the universe by immutable laws, acts contrary to himself by overturning all these laws, this can only be for the sake of benefiting all nature. But it seems contradictory to suppose any case in which the creator and disposer of all things can change the order of the world, for the good of the world. For we must acknowledge that he either has or has not foreseen every thing that would be wanting; and if he has foreseen it, he has ordered it from the beginning, but if he has not foreseen it, he is no longer God.

We are told, that in order to please a nation, a city, or a family, the eternal Being has at different times raised Pelops, Hippolytus, Heres, and some other famous personages from the dead; but it by no means seems probable that the Lord of the universe should forget the care of this universe, in favour of Hippolytus or Pelops.

The more incredible miracles are, (according to the feeble light of our understandings) the more they have been believed. Every nation had so many prodigies, that they were at length considered as ordinary events. Nor were the people of one country disposed to deny the prodigies that happened in another. The Greeks said to the Egyptians, and to the Asiatic nations, "The gods have sometimes addressed themselves to you, but they converse with us every day; if they have fought twenty times for you, they have placed themselves forty times at the head
" of

“ of our armies. You may have metamorpho-
 “ ses, but we have an hundred times more than
 “ you. Your animals speak, but ours have
 “ pronounced very fine discourses.” Even among
 the Romans, several events were said to have
 been predicted by beasts. Livy relates, that an
 ox in full market cried out, “ Rome, take care
 “ of thyself.” Pliny, in his eighth book, tells us,
 that a dog spoke when Tarquin was driven from
 the throne. If we are to believe Suetonius, a
 rook exclaimed in the capitol, when they were
 going to assassinate Domitian, *estai panta kalos*,
well done, or *all is well*. In the same manner,
 one of Achilles’ horses named Xantus, told his
 master, that he would die before Troy. But
 Phryxus’ lamb had spoken long before Achilles’
 horse, and so had the cows of Mount Olympus.
 Thus fables were multiplied instead of being re-
 futed. Mankind did like the attorney, who, in-
 stead of going to law about a forged bond, im-
 mediately produced a forged receipt.

It is true, that among the Romans, there were
 but few persons raised from the dead; they con-
 fined themselves to miraculous cures. The
 Greeks, who were more attached to the metemp-
 sychosis, had a great number of resurrections.
 They derived this secret from the orientals, who
 were the inventors of every kind of science and
 superstition.

Of all the miraculous cures, the most authentic
 are those of the blind man, whom the emperor
 Vespasian restored to sight, and of the paralytic
 patient whom he restored to the use of his limbs.
 This double miracle was operated in Alexandria,
 before an innumerable crowd of Romans, Greeks
 and Egyptians. These cures were not of Vespasian’s

fian's seeking; a powerful emperor does not stand in need of miracles to support him. But the patients themselves came and threw themselves at his feet, and conjured him to cure them. The emperor smiled at their request, and at the same time told them, that such a cure was not in the power of a mortal. Still, however, the two unfortunate wretches persisted in their request; Serapis, they said, had appeared to them; Serapis had promised that they should be cured by Vespasian. After this; Vespasian could no longer withstand their intreaties, he laid his hands on them, but without any expectation of success. The divinity, however, pleased with his modesty and virtue, communicated to him a healing power, and at that instant, the blind man recovered his sight, and the lame man walked. Alexandria, Egypt, and in a word, the whole empire resounded with the praises of Vespasian, the favourite of heaven. The miracle was recorded in the archives of the empire, and is mentioned by all cotemporary historians. Yet, at present, no body believes it, because it is nobody's interest to support it.

If we are to believe a certain writer of our barbarous ages, named Helgaut, king Robert, the son of Hugh Capet, likewise cured a blind man. It is probable that Robert was thus endued with the gift of miracles, as a reward for the charity with which he had condemned his wife's confessor, and the canons of Orleans, to be burnt for not believing the infallibility and absolute power of the pope, and of course, for being Manichæans; or if it was not the recompense of that good action, it was perhaps on account of the

the excommunication he suffered for having lain with the queen his wife.

Philosophers have performed miracles as well as emperors and kings. Those operated by Apollonius of Tyana, are well known. He was a Pythagorean philosopher, of a temperate, chaste, and virtuous disposition, who has never been accused of any of those failings that were laid to the charge of Socrates. He travelled among the magi and among the brachmans, and was every where the more respected, as he was diffident in his manners, constantly giving sage advice, and seldom disputing. The prayer he used to address to the gods is admirable. "Immortal Gods, grant us the things you think we stand in need of, and of which we are not unworthy." He had no enthusiasm; but his disciples differed from him in this respect; they attributed miracles to him, which were collected by Philostratus. The Tyanians placed him among their demi-gods, and the Roman emperors confirmed his apotheosis. But after a time, the deification of Apollonius experienced the same fate as that which was decreed to the Roman emperors; and the chapel of Apollonius was as much deserted as the *Socrateion*, which the Athenians dedicated to Socrates.

The kings of England, from the time of Edward the Confessor, to that of William III. used to perform great miracles, by curing the evil, a disease which the physicians could not cure. But William III. was unwilling to perform miracles, and his successors have followed his example. If England should experience a considerable revolution, so as to be again involved in ignorance, she will then have miracles every day.

Of

Of T E M P L E S.

MANKIND acknowledged a God long before they erected temples. The Arabians, the Chaldeans and Persians who revered the stars, turned their eyes towards heaven, and this was their temple. That of Bel at Babylon has the reputation of being the most ancient of any; but those of Brama in India, if we are to believe the bramins, are of greater antiquity.

It is said in the annals of China, that the first emperors sacrificed in a temple. That of Hercules at Tyre, does not seem to have been one of the most ancient. Hercules was never more than a secondary deity in any country; yet the temple of Tyre was erected long before that of Jerusalem. Hiram had a very magnificent one, when he assisted Solomon in erecting his. Herodotus who visited Tyre, says, that in his time, the archives of that city proved the temple to have been built about two thousand three hundred years. Egypt likewise had long had its temples. The same Herodotus informs us, that the temple of Vulcan at Memphis, had been erected by Menes, at a period which answers to three thousand years before our vulgar æra; and it is by no means probable that the Egyptians would raise a temple to Vulcan, before they had erected one to Isis, their principal divinity.

I cannot reconcile with the ordinary manners of mankind, what Herodotus relates in his second book. He pretends, that excepting the Egyptians and Greeks, all the other nations were accustomed to enjoy their wives in the middle of their temples. I suspect that the Greek text has been

been corrupted here; because the most savage people abstain from this action before * witnesses. No man ever thought of careffing his wife or his mistress in the presence of persons for whom he had the least regard.

It is hardly possible, that among so many nations, who were scrupulously devout, their temples were converted into places of prostitution. I am of opinion, that Herodotus meant to say, that the priests who dwelt in the inclosure, surrounding the temple, were allowed to cohabit with their wives in this inclosure, which had the name of temple, in the same manner as was practised by the Jewish priests and others: but that the Egyptian priests, who did not dwell in the inclosure, abstained from touching their wives when they kept watch in the porches of the temple.

Petty nations were for a long time without any temples. They carried their gods in large boxes or tabernacles. We have already seen that when the Jews dwelt in the deserts to the east of the lake Asphaltites, they had the tabernacle of the god Rempham, of the god Moloch, and the god Kium, as we read in Jeremiah, Amos and St. Stephen.

This custom, which was followed by all the petty nations in the desert, must have been the most ancient of any, it being much easier to have a box, than to erect a large edifice.

* Our late discoveries in the South Seas probably removed M. de Voltaire's doubts on this subject. It is certain that the Otaheiteans know of no restraint in this way. T.

It is probable, that from these portable gods, came the custom of those processions which were adopted by every nation. For it would seem unlikely that they would have presumed to take a god from his place in the temple, and carry him about the town; and this violence would have had the appearance of a sacrilege, if the ancient custom of carrying their deity in a cart or upon mens shoulders had not been long established.

The generality of temples were at first citadels, in which the sacred things were securely guarded. Thus, the Palladium was in the fortress of Troy, and the bucklers that came down from heaven were preserved in the capitol. We find that the temple of the Jews was a strong building, capable of withstanding an assault. In the third book of Kings, we are told that the edifice was sixty cubits, or about ninety of our feet in length, and twenty cubits in breadth. We have hardly any public building that is not much larger than this. But this edifice being of stone, and built upon a hill, was at least able to resist an attack. The windows*, which were much narrower without side than within, resembled those of our old castles. It is said that the priests lodged in wooden apartments, that were built against the wall of the temple.

It is difficult to comprehend the dimensions of this architecture. The same book of Kings informs us, that there were three chambers of wood upon the walls of the house, the one above the other; that the first was five cubits wide, the se-

* "And for the house, he (Solomon) made windows of narrow lights." 1 Kings, chap. vi.

cond six, and the third seven. These proportions are not like ours; and this style of building would have surprized Michael Angelo and Bradamante. At any rate, it is certain, that this temple was built upon the declivity of Mount Moria, and that of course, its depth could not be very considerable. They were obliged to ascend by several steps, to reach the little court in which stood the sanctuary, the length of which was twenty cubits. Now, a temple, in which it is necessary to ascend and descend, is a barbarous edifice. It was estimable for its holiness, but not for its architecture. God did not deem it necessary that the city of Jerusalem should be the most magnificent city in the world, or that his people should be the most potent of all nations. Nor was it necessary that his temple should surpass that of other countries, the most magnificent of any being that in which the purest worship is cultivated.

Most of the commentators have been at the pains to make drawings of this edifice, each after his own manner; but it seems likely that none of these gentlemen even built a house. We may easily conceive, however, that the walls which supported these three chambers being of stone, the Jews might be able to defend themselves a day or two in this little retreat.

This kind of fortress of a people who were strangers to the polite arts, could not hold out against Nabuzardam, one of Nebuchadnezzar's captains.

The second temple, built by Nehemiah, was smaller and less sumptuous. The book of Esdras informs us, that the walls of this new building consisted of three rows of hewn stone, and that all the rest was of wood. But that which

Herod built afterwards, was a real fortress; we are told by Josephus, that he was obliged to demolish the temple of Nehemiah. Herod threw down a part of the precipice to the bottom of Mount Moria, and erected a platform supported by a very thick wall, upon which the temple was raised. Near this edifice was the tower Antonia, which he likewise fortified, so that the temple was truly a citadel. And indeed, we find that the Jews ventured to defend themselves against the army of Titus, till a Roman soldier having thrown some combustible substance into this fort, the whole took fire in an instant. This proves that at the time of Herod, as well as under Nehemiah and Solomon, the inner parts of the temple were of wood.

These edifices of fir are far from conveying an idea of the magnificence described by that exaggerator, Josephus. He tells us, that Titus having visited the sanctuary, admired it, and acknowledged that its splendor far exceeded what he had been told of it. But it is by no means likely that a Roman emperor in the midst of slaughter, and treading upon heaps of dead bodies, should amuse himself with admiring such a building, as a sanctuary, which was only twenty cubits in length; or that a man who had seen the capitol, should be surprized at the beauty of a Jewish temple. This same temple was doubtless very holy, but a sanctuary twenty cubits long had not been constructed by a Vitruvius. The fine temples were those of Ephesus, Alexandria, Athens, Olympia and Rome.

Josephus, in his Discourse against Appion, observes, that the Jews had only one temple, because there is only one God. This reasoning does not

seem conclusive; for if the Jews had had seven or eight hundred miles of country, as was the case with so many other nations, they must have spent their lives in travelling, to offer up their sacrifices every year in this temple. As there is only one God, so it is certain that all the temples upon earth ought to be erected to him alone; but it by no means follows, that all the world ought to have but one temple. Superstition is always supported by a bad kind of logic.

Besides, how can Josephus say that the Jews had only one temple, since it is well known that from the reign of Ptolemy Philometer, they had the temple of *the onion* at Bubastis in Egypt.

Of M A G I C.

WHAT is magic? The secret of doing that which nature cannot do; or in other words, of performing impossibilities; hence we find that mankind in all ages have believed in magic. The word itself is derived from the *mag*, *magdim*, or magi of Chaldæa. They knew more of it than any body else; they endeavoured to ascertain the causes of rain and of fine weather; and they soon got the reputation of making both. These were astronomers; but others, who were more daring and more ignorant, commenced astrologers, an event happening to take place under the conjunction of two planets, these two planets were considered as the cause of the event, and the astrologer as the master of the planets. When any persons had seen their friends dying or dead, in a dream, the magicians were supposed to have raised the ghosts of the dead,

Having

Having discovered the course of the moon, it was natural to suppose that they could bring the moon down upon the earth. They were even said to dispose of the lives of men, either by making little figures of wax, or by pronouncing the name of God or that of the devil. Clement of Alexandria, in the fifth book of his *Stromates*, says, that according to an ancient author, Moses pronounced the word *Jhako* or *Jehovah* in so efficacious a manner, in the ear of Phara-Nekefr, king of Egypt, that that prince died upon the spot.

In a word, from the days of Jannes and Membrés, who were the wise men and sorcerers of Pharaoh, to the time of the marshal d'Ancre, who was burnt at Paris for killing a white cock at the full moon, it is impossible to point out a single period free from sorcery.

The *Pythoniſſa*, or witch of Endor, who raised Samuel's ghost, is well known; it seems strange indeed, that the word *Python*, which is Greek, should be known by the Jews so early as the time of Saul. Several learned men have concluded from this circumstance, that this part of the Jewish history was not written till after the time of Alexander, when those people traded with the Greeks. But this is not the object of our present inquiry.

But to return to magic. The Jews professed it as soon as they began to be spread abroad in the world. The Sabbath of forcerers is a convincing proof; and the goat with which those forcerers were supposed to copulate, came from the ancient commerce that the Jews had with goats in the desert, and which they are reproached with in *Leviticus*, chap. xvii.

There

There have been hardly any prosecutions for witchcraft amongst us, without some Jew being called in question.

The Romans, enlightened as they were at the time of Augustus, were as infatuated as we are on this subject. See the eighth Eclogue of Virgil, entitled *Pharmaceutria*.

Carmina vel cælo possunt deducere lunam

By strains pale Cynthia from her sphere descends.

* * * *

* * * *

* * * *

His ego sæpe lupum fieri et se condere sylvis

Moerin, sæpe animas imis excire sepulcris.

With these, sage Moeris have I seen become

A wolf, and through wild forests howling roam;

With these, from graves the starting spectres warn.

People are astonished that Virgil should now a-days be considered at Naples as a forcerer. But their wonder will cease, when they have read this eclogue.

Horace reproaches Sagana and Canidia with their horrid incantations. The first heads of the republic were infected with these absurd notions. Sextus, the son of the great Pompey, sacrificed a child in one of his enchantments.

The making of love potions was a much more harmless kind of magic. The Jews used to sell them to the Roman ladies. Those of that nation who could not become rich brokers, commenced prophets, or made love potions.

All these extravagances, some of which were horrid, and others ridiculous, were adopted by
us,

us, and 'tis only within this century that they have begun to lose their credit. Our missionaries were surprized to find similar notions in vogue at the other extremity of the world; and lamented the people who were so inspired by the devil. Alas! my friends, why did not you stay in your own country? You would not have found more devils there, but you would have found quite as many absurdities.

You would have seen thousands of wretches weak enough to fancy themselves forcerers, and judges infatuated, and barbarous enough to condemn them to the flames; you would have seen laws instituted in Europe against magic, in the same manner as against robbery and murder; these laws were founded on the decisions of councils, and what is worse, is, that the common people seeing their magistrates and the church believing in magic, were the more firmly persuaded of its existence; consequently, the more they persecuted forcerers, the more they increased their number. The source of this general and fatal error, was ignorance; and this proves that they who undeceive mankind, are truly their benefactors.

It has been said that the general consent of all mankind is a proof of the truth. What a proof! All nations have believed in magic, astrology, oracles, and the influence of the moon. It ought rather to have been said, that the consent of all the sages was, not a proof, but a kind of probability. And yet after all, what kind of probability could this have been, when we find that till the time of Copernicus, the wisest men supposed the earth to be immoveable, and in the centre of the universe?

No

No nation whatever has any right to ridicule another. Rabelais calls Picatrix "My reverend father in the devil," because magic was taught at Toledo, Salamanca and Seville; but the Spaniards in their turn might reproach the French with the prodigious number of their forcerers and witches.

Of all countries upon earth, France is, perhaps, that in which absurdity and cruelty have been the most completely united. There is not a tribunal in France, that has not condemned a great number of forcerers to be burnt. In ancient Rome, there were fools who fancied themselves forcerers; but there were no magistrates who were so barbarous as to burn them.

Of human Victims.

IF mankind had only been deceived, they would have been too happy; but time, which sometimes corrupts customs, and sometimes rectifies them, having spilt the blood of animals upon the altar, the butcherly priests, who were accustomed to blood, easily made the transition from animals to men; and superstition, the unnatural daughter of religion, so far deviated from the purity of her mother, as to induce men to sacrifice their own children, under a pretence that whatever they hold most dear ought to be given to God.

The first sacrifice of this kind, if we may believe the fragments of Sanchoniathon, was that of Jehud among the Phœnicians, who was offered up by his father Hillu, about two thousand years before our vulgar æra. This was at a time when the great states of Syria, Chaldæa, and

A a a

Egypt

Egypt were not only established, but in a very flourishing condition; and even then, says Herodotus, they were accustomed to drown a virgin in the Nile, in order to obtain from that river a favourable inundation, which might be neither too copious nor too inconsiderable.

The use of these abominable sacrifices was established in almost every country. Pausanias pretends that Lycaon was the first that immolated human victims in Greece. This custom must certainly have been adopted before the Trojan war, since we find Homer making Achilles sacrifice twelve Trojans to the shade of Patroclus, and Homer would not have ventured to have introduced so horrid a circumstance, or to have run the chance of disgusting his readers, if such sacrifices had not been in vogue.

I say nothing of the sacrifice of Iphigenia, nor of that of Idamantes, the son of Idomeneus; whether true or false, they equally prove what was the prevailing opinion. It is hardly possible to doubt that the Scythians sacrificed strangers.

If we descend to later times, we shall find the Tyrians and Carthaginians in time of great danger, sacrificing a man to Saturn. The same thing was practised in Italy; and the Romans themselves, who condemned these horrid customs, sacrificed two Gauls and two Greeks, in order to expiate the crime of a vestal. This we are told by Plutarch, in his Questions concerning the Romans.

The Gauls and Germans adopted this shocking practice. The Druids used to burn human victims in great figures of osier. Among the Germans, there were witches who cut the throats of
those

those who were condemned to death, and foretold events by the greater or less rapidity with which the blood flowed from the wound.

I am persuaded that these sacrifices were rare: if they had been frequent, if they had been established into annual festivals, if every family had been in continual fear that the priests were coming to choose their eldest son or their handsomest daughter, in order to pluck out their hearts upon a consecrated stone, they would soon have destroyed the priests themselves. It is probable that these holy murders were committed only in times of urgent necessity and great danger, when men were overcome by fear, and when the false idea of the public good obliged the feelings of individuals to be silent.

Among the bramins, it was not customary for all the widows to burn themselves on the bodies of their husbands; but it is certain that the most foolish and devout have from time immemorial, and do still continue to sacrifice themselves in this astonishing manner. The Scythians sometimes sacrificed to the manes of their kans, those officers who were the most esteemed by those princes. Herodotus says, they were empaled around the royal corpse; but it does not appear from history, that this custom was of any long continuance.

If we were to read an history of the Jews, written by an author of any other nation, we should with difficulty believe that a fugitive people did really come from Egypt by the express order of God, to extirpate seven or eight little nations, of whom they had no knowledge; to murder without mercy all the women, old men, and children at the breast, and to reserve only the

little girls; and that this holy people was punished by God, for having been so criminal as to save a single man who was included in the anathema. We should hardly believe I say, that so abominable a nation could possibly exist upon the face of the earth; but as these people themselves relate these transactions in their holy books, we must believe them.

I am not considering here, whether these books were inspired or not. Our holy church, which detests the Jews, informs us that the Jewish books were dictated by God the creator and father of all mankind; I can therefore have no doubts, nor allow myself to reason in the least upon the subject.

It is true that our feeble understanding can conceive in God no other wisdom, justice or goodness, than that of which we have an idea; but he followed the dictates of his holy will, and it would be presumptuous in us to judge him. I shall therefore confine myself to what is purely historical.

The Jews have a law by which they are expressly ordered to spare no person who is devoted to the Lord. "None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed, but shall surely be put to death," says the Levitical law, chap. xxvii. It is in virtue of this law that we find Jephthah sacrificing his own daughter, and the prophet Samuel cutting in pieces king Agag. The Pentateuch informs us, that in the petty country of Midian, which included about nine square leagues, the Israelites having found six hundred and seventy five thousand sheep, seventy two thousand oxen, sixty-one thousand asses, and thirty-two thousand virgins, Moses commanded them

them to massacre all the men, women and children, but to save the girls, only thirty-two of whom were destroyed. What is most remarkable in this transaction is, that Moses was son-in-law to Jethro the high priest of the Midianites, who had done him the most signal services, and loaded him with acts of kindness.

The same book informs us, that Joshua, the son of Nun, having conducted his horde dry shod through the river Jordan, and caused the walls of Jericho to fall by the sound of trumpets, put all the inhabitants to the sword, except Rahab the harlot, and her family, who had concealed the spies of the holy people; that the same Joshua devoted twelve thousand inhabitants of the town of Ai to death; that he sacrificed thirty-one kings of the country to the Lord, all of whom were hanged. We have nothing comparable to these religious assassinations in our modern times, unless perhaps it is the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the Irish massacre.

It is to be lamented however, that many persons doubt whether the Jews really found six hundred and seventy-five thousand sheep, and two and thirty-thousand virgins, in a village situated in a stony desert, whereas nobody doubts the truth of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. But we again acknowledge, and we cannot too often repeat it, that our reason is too feeble to explain the wonderful events of antiquity, and the motives that might induce God, the master of life and death, to employ the Jewish nation as an instrument to exterminate the people of Canaan.

Of the Eleusinian Mysteries.

AMIDST the chaos of popular superstitions which would have converted the whole globe into an immense den of wild beasts, there arose a salutary institution, which prevented a part of mankind from falling into a state of brutal ignorance; this was the institution of mysteries and expiations. It was impossible, that among so many cruel ideots, there should not be some few mild and sensible people, and likewise philosophers, who would endeavour to bring back mankind to morality and reason.

These sages made use of superstition itself to correct these enormous abuses, in the same manner as we employ the heart of the viper to obviate the ill effects of its bite. They combined a great number of fables with useful truths, and these truths were supported by fables.

We are no longer acquainted with the mysteries of Zoroaster. We know but little of those of Isis; but it seems indisputable that they announced the great system of a future life; for Celsus says to Origenes in his eighth book, "You boast of believing in eternal punishments, and did not all the ministers of the mysteries announce them to the initiated?"

The unity of God was the principal dogma in all those mysteries. We have still the prayer of the priestesses of Isis preserved in Apuleius: "The celestial powers serve thee; hell acknowledges thy power; the universe turns under thy hand, thou treadest Tartarus under thy feet; the stars answer at thy call; the seasons return at thy orders; the elements obey thee."

The

The mysterious ceremonies of Ceres, were an imitation of those of Isis. They who had committed crimes, confessed and expiated them; they fasted, purified themselves, and gave alms. All who were initiated into the mysteries, were bound by an oath to keep them secret, and this rendered them the more respectable. The mysteries were celebrated in the night, in order to inspire a certain holy horror. They represented a kind of tragedy, the story of which was calculated to display the happiness of the just, and the punishment of the wicked.

The Plato's and Cicero's, and others of the greatest men of antiquity, have given their testimony in favour of these mysteries, which in their time, had not degenerated from their primitive purity.

Several very learned men have proved that the sixth book of the *Æneid* contains a figurative description of what was practised in those secret and celebrated spectacles. There is indeed no mention made of *Demiourgos*, who represented the Creator; but the poet lets us see in the vestibule, or first part of the piece, the children whom their parents had suffered to perish, and this was a proper lesson for fathers and mothers.

Continuo auditæ voces, vagitus et ingens,
Infantumque animæ flentes in limine primo:
Quos dulcis vitæ exsortes, et ab ubere raptos,
Abstulit atra dies, et funere merfit acerbo *.

ÆN. lib. vi.

* Now as they enter'd, doleful screams they hear,
And tender cries of infants pierce the ear.

Just

In the next place appears Minos judging the dead. The wicked were dragged into Tartarus, and the just were conducted into the Elysian fields. These gardens were all that ordinary men could aspire to. There were none but heroes and demi-gods who were honoured with a place in heaven. All religions adopted a garden for the residence of the just; and even when the Essenians among the Jews received the doctrine of another life, they imagined that the blessed would go after death into gardens bordering on the sea; for as to the Pharisees, they adopted the metempsychosis, and not the doctrine of a resurrection. If among so many profane things, we may be allowed to quote the sacred history of Jesus Christ, we may remark, that when he said to the penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in the *garden," he conformed himself to the language of all mankind.

The Eleusinian mysteries became the most celebrated. One thing very remarkable is, that they used to read in them the beginning of Sanchoniathon's Theogony; a proof this, that Sanchoniathon had announced a supreme God, the creator and governor of the world. This there-

Just new to life, by too severe a doom,
Snatch'd from the cradle to the silent tomb! PITT.

The reader will find many ingenious remarks on this passage, in a Dissertation on the sixth book of Virgil's *Æneis*, by the late learned bishop Warburton. See his *Divine Legation*, &c. book ii. sect. 4. T.

* We have here given M. de Voltaire's expression; but in our English translation of the New Testament, the reader will find the word *paradise* used instead of *garden*. See St. Luke, chap. xxiii. The Hebrew word פֶּדֶס, *paradise*, signifies a garden of pleasure. T.

fore,

fore, was the doctrine they displayed to the initiated, who had been educated in the belief of polytheism. Let us suppose a superstitious people, among ourselves, who from their tender infancy have been accustomed to pay the same homage to the holy Virgin, St. John and the other saints, as to God himself. It would perhaps be dangerous to undeceive them on a sudden; it would be prudent to begin with pointing out to the most moderate and rational of them, the infinite distance there is between God and his creatures. This was exactly what the mystagogues did. The persons who were initiated, assembled in the temple of Ceres, and the hierophante* taught them, that instead of adoring Ceres, conducting Triptolemus in a chariot drawn by dragons, they ought to worship the God who nourishes mankind, and who had permitted Ceres and Triptolemus to bring agriculture into esteem.

This is so true, that the hierophante began by reciting the verses of the ancient Orpheus;
 “ Tread in the path of justice, adore the sole
 “ master of the universe; he is one, to him all
 “ beings owe their existence; he acts in them and
 “ by them, but never has been seen by mortal
 “ eyes.”

I own, that I do not conceive how Pausanias can say that these verses are not equal to those of Homer; it is certain, that in point of sense, they

* The hierophantes, or mystagogues (ἱεροφάντης, Μυσταγωγός) were the guides or conductors who instructed the initiated in the preparatory ceremonies, and led them through, and explained to them all the shews and representations of the mysteries. Among the Greeks, they were indifferently of either sex, but in Rome, the mysteries of Ceres were always celebrated by female priests. T.

are preferable to the whole, both of the Iliad and the Odyssey.

The learned bishop Warburton, altho' very unjust in many of his bold decisions, gives great weight to what I have just now said concerning the necessity there was for concealing the dogma of the unity of God from the vulgar, who were infatuated with polytheism. He quotes an anecdote related by Plutarch, of the young Alcibiades, who after having assisted at these mysteries, insulted the statue of Mercury in an hour of jollity with some of his friends, and that the people were so incensed at this, that they insisted on his condemnation.

The greatest discretion was therefore required not to disgust the prejudices of the multitude. Alexander himself, when in Egypt, having obtained leave of the hierophante of the mysteries, to communicate the secret of the initiated to his mother, conjured her at the same time to burn his letter as soon as she read it, that she might not irritate the Greeks.

They who have been so far misguided by a false zeal, as to pretend that these mysteries were instituted only for the most infamous purposes, ought to be undeceived by the very term *initiated*, which implies that they began a new life.

Another unanswerable proof, that these mysteries were celebrated with no other view than to inspire men with virtue, is, the manner in which they dissolved the assembly. Among the Greeks, they did this by pronouncing the two ancient Phœnician words *Koff omphet*, which signify "Watch and be pure." In short we may observe, that when the emperor Nero visited Greece, after having been guilty of the death of his mother

ther, he could not be initiated into these mysteries; the crime he had been guilty of was too enormous, and powerful as he was, the initiated would not have admitted him. Zozimus informs us also, that Constantine could not find pagan priests who were willing to purify him, and free him from the absolution of the murders he had committed.

It appears evidently therefore, that among those nations whom we stile pagans, gentiles and idolaters, there was a truly pure religion, while the bulk of the people, and the priests, had shameful customs, puerile ceremonies and ridiculous doctrines, and sometimes even shed the blood of their fellow creatures, in honour of certain imaginary deities, who were despised and detested by philosophers.

This pure religion consisted in acknowledging the existence of one supreme God, and likewise his providence and justice. These mysteries, if we may believe Tertullian, were disfigured by the ceremony of regeneration. In order to be initiated, it was necessary that the aspirant should seem to be born again; this was a symbol of the new kind of life he was about to embrace. They presented him with a crown, and he trampled it under his feet; the hierophante then held over him the sacred knife, and feigning a blow at him, the aspirant fell down as if he was dead, after which he rose again as it were from the grave. There are still some remains of this ancient ceremony among the free masons.

Pausanias informs us, that in several of the temples of Ceres, they used to scourge the initiated; this odious custom was introduced long afterwards into several christian churches. I have no doubt

that with all these mysteries, the principles of which were so sage and useful, they combined many ridiculous superstitions. These superstitions paved the way for debauchery, which was followed by contempt; so that at length the only remains of those ancient mysteries, were those troops of vagabonds whom we have seen in all parts of Europe, under the name of Egyptians, Bohemians, and Gipsies, dancing the dance of the priests of Isis, selling their balsams, curing the itch, though covered with it themselves, telling fortunes, and stealing our poultry. Such has been the fate of an institution the most sacred of any in half the known world.

Of the Jews, at the Time they began to be known.

WE shall endeavour to say as little as possible of the divine part of the Jewish history; where we find ourselves obliged to mention it, it shall only be so far as their miracles are essentially connected with the series of events. For the continual prodigies that signalized all the steps of that nation, we feel all the respect they merit. We believe them with all that faith which is required by the church; we examine them not, but confine ourselves to what is historical. We shall speak of the Jews, as we would of the Scythians or Greeks, by discussing facts and weighing probabilities. Nobody having written their history but themselves, before the Romans destroyed their government, we of course can consult only their own annals.

The Jews are one of the most modern nations, if we consider them as we have done others, only from the time they began to form an establishment

ment and to be in possession of a capital. They do not seem to have attracted the attention of their neighbours before the reign of Solomon, who lived nearly at the time of Hesiod and Homer, and of the first archontes * of Athens.

The name of *Salomoh* or *Soleiman* is well known to the Orientals; but they are but little acquainted with that of David, and still less with that of Saul. The Jews, before the time of Saul, were considered only as a tribe of wandering Arabs, who were so far from being formidable that the Phœnicians treated them nearly in the same manner as the Lacedæmonians treated the Helotes. They were slaves who were not allowed to carry arms. They were not permitted to forge iron, nor even to sharpen their ploughshares or their wedges. They were obliged to go to their masters for every thing they wanted in this way. The Jews acknowledge this in the book of Samuel †; and they add, that there was neither sword nor spear in the battle that Saul and Jonathan fought against the Phœnicians or Philistines at Beth-heron; a day in which we are told that Saul made a vow to sacrifice to the Lord whomsoever should eat during the combat.

* This was the title the Athenians gave to their chief magistrates. T.

† “Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel, (for the Philistines said, lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears.)

“But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his ax, and his mattock.

“So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan.” 1 Samuel, chap. xiii,

It

It is true, that in a preceding chapter * we are told, that Saul, before this battle which was gained without arms, collected an army of three hundred and thirty thousand men, with which he defeated the Ammonites. This does not seem to agree with the account they soon afterwards give us of their having neither sword nor javelin, or any other weapon. Besides, the greatest kings have seldom had so numerous an army on foot as three hundred and thirty thousand effective men. How happened it that the Jews, who seem to have been wandering and oppressed in this little country, who had not a single fortified town, nor even any kind of weapons, how happened it I say, that they were able to bring three hundred and thirty thousand men into the field? With such an army they might have conquered Asia and Europe. We shall leave to learned and respectable authors the trouble of conciliating these apparent contradictions, as for our parts we respect every thing we engaged to respect, and shall now endeavour to trace the History of the Jews from their own writings.

Of the Jews in Egypt.

THE Jewish annals inform us, that in very remote ages this nation dwelt on the confines of Egypt, in the petty country of Goshan, or Góssan, towards Mount Casius and the Lake Sirbon. The Arabs are, still accustomed to go thither to feed their flocks in winter. This nation was composed only of a single family, which at the end of two hundred and fifty years consisted of two millions of persons: for, in order to furnish the six

* 1 Samuel, chap. xi.

hundred thousand combatants; which, according to the book of Genesis, came out of Egypt, the whole nation must have amounted at least to two millions. This increase, which is so contrary to the order of nature, is one of the miracles that God condescended to operate in favour of the Jews.

It is to no purpose that a multitude of learned writers express their astonishment, that the king of Egypt should order two midwives to destroy all the Hebrew male children; and that the king's daughter, who resided at Memphis, should come to bathe at a distance from that city, in an arm of the Nile, where nobody ever ventured to bathe on account of the crocodiles. It is in vain that they raise objections on the age of eighty years, to which Moses had attained, before he undertook to conduct a whole nation out of slavery. They dispute about the ten plagues of Egypt; they observe that the Egyptian forcerers could not perform the same miracles as one that was sent from God; and that if God gave them this power, he seemed to be acting against himself. They pretend that when Moses had changed all the waters into blood, there could be no more water remaining for the magicians to operate the same metamorphosis.

They ask how Pharaoh could pursue the Israelites with a numerous cavalry after all the horses had been destroyed by the fifth and sixth plagues? They ask why six hundred thousand combatants fled although they were headed by God himself, and were able to overthrow the Egyptians, of whom all the first-born had been struck with death? They likewise ask, why God did not give the fertile country of Egypt to his chosen people, instead of making them wander forty years in the desert?

To

To all these objections there is only one answer to be made; and this answer is, that God ordained these things; the church believes them, and it is our duty to believe them. This constitutes the difference between the history of the Jews and that of other nations. Every nation has had its prodigies, but among the Israelites, every thing is miraculous; nor can it be otherwise, since they were conducted by God himself. It is evident that the history of God must be very different from that of men. This is the reason why we relate none of those supernatural events, of which none but inspired writers ought to treat; still less shall we venture to explain them. We shall therefore confine ourselves to the few occurrences that may be submitted to criticism.

Of Moses, considered merely as the Head of a Nation.

THE master of nature alone can give strength to the arm he condescends to employ. Every thing is supernatural in Moses. More than one learned person has considered him as a very dexterous politician. Others see in him only a feeble reed, which the divine hand condescended to make use of, to determine the fate of empires. And indeed, what idea are we to form of this person, who at the age of eighty, undertook to conduct an entire nation, over whom he had no claim? His arm was unable to combat, or his tongue to articulate. He is described as a decrepit old man, and a stammerer. During forty years, he led his followers only into frightful deserts. He was desirous of procuring them a fixed residence, but left them in a wandering state. If we follow him through the deserts of Sur, Zin, Oreb

Oreb, Sinai, Pharan and Kadesh-Barnea, and see him travelling in a retrograde direction, till he returns nearly to the place from whence he set out, we shall find it difficult to consider him as a great general. We see him at the head of six hundred thousand combatants, and yet providing neither cloathing nor provisions for his troops. God did every thing; God supplied every want; God nourished and cloathed his people by miracles. Moses therefore was nothing of himself; and his incapacity proves that he could be guided only by the arm of the Almighty. On this account, we are considering in him only the man, and not the minister of God. In this latter quality, he is the object of a more sublime inquiry.

He was desirous of going into the land of Canaan, westward of Jordan, towards Jericho, which is indeed the only fertile spot in the whole country; and instead of doing this, we see him turning towards the east, between Ezion-gaber and the dead sea, into a dreary, barren, and mountainous country, where no trees or shrubs are to be seen, nor any rivulets or springs, except a few little wells of salt water. The Canaanites or Phœnicians hearing of this irruption of a strange people, came to oppose them in these deserts, towards Kadesh-Barnea. But how could Moses suffer himself to be defeated at the head of six hundred thousand troops, in a country that at present does not contain three thousand inhabitants? In the course of nine and thirty years, he obtained two victories; but without accomplishing a single object of his legislation. He and his people died before they had got footing in the country they intended to subdue.

C c c

A legislator,

A legislator, according to our common notions, ought to make himself beloved and feared; but he ought not to extend his severity to a degree of barbarity; he ought not to order his people to cut the throats of their brethren at random, instead of inflicting punishments on the culpable, by the hands of the law.

Is it possible that Moses, at the age of almost an hundred and twenty years, could of his own accord be so inhuman, so hardened in cruelty, as to command the Levites to massacre twenty-three thousand of their brethren without distinction, merely because his own brother had gone astray, who ought rather to have died than to have made a calf for the people to worship? And yet we are told this, and what is more, that this same brother was the high priest.

Moses had espoused a Midianite, the daughter of Jethro, the high-priest of Midian, in Arabia Petræa. Jethro had loaded him with favours; he had given him his son to serve him as a guide in the deserts; how then could Moses be so cruel and act so contrary to sound politics, (if we may judge according to our own feeble ideas) as to destroy twenty thousand of Jethro's countrymen, under a pretence that a Jew had been found in a tent with a Midianitish woman? And after these astonishing butcheries, how can it be said that Moses was the mildest of men? Humanly speaking, we cannot but acknowledge that such horrors are shocking to reason and nature. But if we consider Moses as the minister of God's vengeance, the circumstances of the case will then be very different; we then no longer look upon him as a mortal who acted like other men, but

but as the instrument of the divinity, whom it is our duty to adore, and to be silent.

If Moses had instituted his religion of himself, as was the case with Zoroaster, Thauth, the primitive bramins, Numa, Mahomet, and so many others, we might ask him why he did not employ in his religion, the most efficacious and useful means of restraining the cupidity of mankind, by announcing to his people the immortality of the soul, and the doctrine of rewards and punishments after death, dogmas which had long been received in Egypt, Phœnicia, Mesopotamia, Persia and India? "You have been instructed,"—we might say to him, "in the wisdom of the Egyptians, you are a legislator, and yet you wholly neglect the principal dogma of the Egyptians, a dogma the most necessary of any to mankind, a belief so holy and salutary, that your own people, ignorant as they were, embraced it long after your time; at least it was in part adopted by the Essenians and Pharisees at the end of a thousand years."

This objection, however powerful it might be, when raised against an ordinary legislator, falls to the ground, and loses all its strength, when brought against a law given by God himself, who having vouchsafed to be king of the Jews, punished and rewarded them temporally, and was unwilling to reveal to them the knowledge of the immortality of the soul, and of the eternal pains of hell, before the time he had decreed for this discovery. Among the Jews, every event that is purely human, is a subject of horror; while every thing divine is far above our ideas. Both the one and the other, therefore, effectually silence us.

There

There have been several persons of the most profound erudition, who have carried the pyrrhorism of history so far, as to doubt whether there ever was a Moses. His life, which is a series of miracles from his cradle to his grave, has appeared to them to be an imitation of the ancient Arabian fables, and particularly of that of the ancient Bacchus*. They are unable to determine the period at which he flourished; even the name of the *Pharaoh*, or king of Egypt, in whose reign he is said to have lived, is unknown. There are no monuments or traces remaining of the country in which he is said to have travelled. They think it impossible that Moses could govern two or three millions of persons, during forty years, in uninhabitable deserts, where at present we hardly find two or three wandering tribes, all of whom do not consist of more than three or four thousand men. We are far from adopting this rash sentiment which would sap the foundation of the Jewish history.

Nor are we more disposed to listen to the opinion of Aben Ezra, Maimonides, Nugnes, or the author of the Jewish ceremonies; altho' the learned le Clerc, Middleton, the literati who are known to us, under the title of the Dutch Theologists, and even the great Newton have corroborated this notion. These illustrious writers pretend that neither Moses, nor Joshua, could write the books that are attributed to them: they tell us that their histories and laws must have been engraved upon stone, if they really did exist; that this art requires prodigious pains, and that it was not possible to cultivate it in deserts,

* See the article *Bacchus*,

They

They ground their opinion, as may be seen elsewhere, on anticipations and apparent contradictions. In opposition to these great men, we embrace the common opinion, which is that of the synagogue, and of the church whose infallibility we acknowledge.

Not that we venture to accuse the Le Clercs, the Middletons, and the Newtons of impiety; God forbid! we are convinced, that if the books of Moses and Joshua, and the rest of the Pentateuch, did not appear to them to have been written by those Israelitish heroes, yet they were not the less persuaded that those books are inspired. They acknowledged the finger of God in each line of Genesis, Joshua, Judges and Ruth. The Jewish writer was as it were only the secretary of God; it was God that dictated every thing. It is evident that such was the opinion of Newton. God preserve us from resembling those perverse hypocrites, who seize every opportunity of accusing great men of irreligion, in the same manner as they were formerly accused of magic. We should think we were not only acting in opposition to probity, but cruelly insulting the Christian religion, if we were abandoned enough to endeavour to persuade the public, that the men of the greatest genius and learning in the world, are not true Christians. The more we respect the church to which we submit our own opinions, the more we are persuaded that this same church tolerates the doctrines of these learned and virtuous persons with the charity for which it is so distinguished.

Of the Jews after Moses, to the Time of Saul.

I SHALL not inquire, why, when Josuah or Joshua the leader of the Jews, was about to conduct his people from the East of Jordan, to the West towards Jericho, it was necessary that God should suspend the course of that river, which in that place was not above forty feet wide, and over which he might have thrown a bridge of planks, on which he might have forded with still greater ease. There were several fordable places in this river, witness that in which the Israelites massacred forty-two thousand of their brethren, who could not pronounce the word *Shiboleth*.

I do not presume to ask why Jericho fell at the sound of trumpets; both these were new prodigies that God vouchsafed to operate in favour of his chosen people, and are therefore not the objects of history. I shall not examine the right Joshua had to destroy villages that had never before heard his name mentioned. The Jews said, "We are the descendants of Abraham; Abraham visited your country four hundred and forty years ago; it therefore belongs to us, and it is right for us to put your mothers, your wives, and your children to the sword."

Fabricius and Holstenius have started the following objection: 'What should we say, if a Norwegian were to come into Germany, with a few hundreds of his countrymen, and say to the Germans,' "four hundred years ago, a man of our country, who was the son of a potter, travelled near Vienna, so that Austria belongs to us?" The same authors observe, that the times of Joshua are not ours, that it is not allowable for us to search with our profane eyes into these

these divine mysteries, and that God had a right to punish the sins of the Canaanites by the hands of the Jews.

We are told, that at the taking of Jericho, the Jews sacrificed to the Lord all the inhabitants, old men, women, and children at the breast, and even every living thing; and that the only person they saved, was a harlot who had secreted the Jewish spies in her house; but these spies were surely of no use, since the walls of the city were to fall at the sound of trumpets. What could be their motives for destroying the animals that might have been useful to them?

In regard to this woman to whom the vulgate gives the appellation of *meretrix*, or harlot, it is probable that she afterwards led a more reputable life, since from her, not only David, but even the Saviour of the world, are said to have been descended. All these events are mysteries which we do not attempt to penetrate.

The book of Joshua informs us, that this chief having made himself master of part of the land of Canaan, hanged thirty-one kings of that country, that is to say, one and thirty heads of towns, who had dared to defend their families and possessions. We ought here to prostrate ourselves before the Lord, who thus chastised the sins of these kings, by the sword of Joshua.

It is by no means strange that the neighbouring nations should unite together against the Jews, who in the eyes of those unenlightened people, could be considered only as execrable murderers, and not as the sacred instruments of the divine vengeance, and of the future salvation of mankind. They were reduced to slavery by Cushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia. Me-

sopotamia,

sopotamia, it is true, is at a great distance from Jericho; Cushan-rishathaim must therefore have conquered Syria and a part of Palestine. Be it as it may, they remained eight years in slavery, and were afterwards sixty-two years without stirring. These sixty-two years were a kind of servitude, since they were ordered by the law of Moses, to take possession of all the country, from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates; all this vast extent of territory * had been promised to them, and we may reasonably suppose, that if they had been free, they would have attempted to make themselves masters of it. They were slaves eighteen years under Eglon, king of the Moabites, who was assassinated by Ehud; after this, they were slaves to some other Canaanitish nation whom they do not name, till they were delivered by the heroine and prophetess Deborah. After this, they were again seven years in slavery, till the time of Gideon.

During eighteen years, they were slaves to the Phœnicians, whom they call Philistines, till the time of Jephtha. After this, they were again reduced to slavery by the Phœnicians, and continued in that state forty years, till the time of Saul. What seems particularly astonishing, is that they were in slavery even at the time of

* “The Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying, “unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of “Egypt, unto the great river Euphrates.” Genesis, chap. xv. 18.

“The Lord our God spake to us in Horeb, saying, turn “you and take your journey, and go to the mount of th “Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the “plain, in the hills and in the vales, and in the south, and “by the river Euphrates.” Deuteronomy, chap. i. 7.

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Sampson, who was able to kill a thousand Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass, and by whose hands the Lord was pleased to operate the most wonderful prodigies.

Let us here pause for a moment, that we may see how many Jews were exterminated by their own brethren, or by the order of God himself, from the time they were wandering in the deserts, till the period at which they had a king, who was chosen by lot.

Destroyed by the Levites, after the adoration of the golden calf, which Moses reduced to ashes, —	Jews. 23,000
Consumed by fire, on account of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram's rebellion	250
Destroyed by the plague on the same account ———	14,700
Destroyed for committing whoredom with the Midianitish women	24,000
Slain at the passages of Jordan, for not being able to pronounce the word <i>Shibboleth</i> ———	42,000
Killed by the Benjamites whom they attacked ———	40,000
Benjamites killed by the other tribes	45,000
When the ark was taken by the Philistines, and God in order to punish them, having afflicted them with the piles, they brought back the ark to Beth-shemesh, with an offering to the Lord of five golden emerods, and five golden mice; the men of Beth-shemesh were struck dead for looking into the ark, to the number of	50,070
Sum total	239,020
D d d	Here

Here we see two hundred and thirty-nine thousand and twenty Jews destroyed by the order of God himself, or by their civil wars, without reckoning those who perished in the desert, or who fell in their battles with the Canaanites, &c.

If we were to judge of the Jews as we do of other nations, we should hardly conceive it possible for the children of Jacob to have produced a race sufficiently numerous to support such a loss. But God who conducted them, and who likewise tried and punished them, rendered this nation so different in every respect from the rest of mankind, that we ought not to consider it in the same light in which we are accustomed to view the rest of the world, nor to judge of its occurrences in the manner we judge of ordinary events.

Of the Jews from the Time of Saul.

THE fate of the Jews under their kings does not seem to have been more fortunate than it was under their judges.

Saul, their first king, was obliged to destroy himself; and his two sons, Ish-bosheth and Mephibosheth, were assassinated.

David delivered seven of Saul's grandsons into the hands of the Gibeonites, by whom they were all put to death. He ordered his son Solomon to destroy Adonijah his other son, and likewise Joab, the captain of his host. King Aza caused a great part of the inhabitants of Jerusalem to be massacred. Baasha assassinated Nadab the son of Jeroboam, and all his house. Jehu assassinated Joram and Ahaziah, together with the seventy sons of Ahab, the forty-two brethren of Ahaziah,

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and all their friends. Athaliah destroyed all her grandsons, except Joash, and she herself was afterwards assassinated by Jehoiada the high-priest. Joash was murdered by his own servants; Amaziah likewise was murdered, as was Zachariah afterwards by Shallum, who in his turn was assassinated by Menahem, the same who ripped open all the bellies of the pregnant women in Tiphshah. Pekahiah, the son of Menahem, was assassinated by Pekah, the son of Remaliah, and this Pekah was murdered by Hoshea, the son of Elah. Manasseh caused a great number of the Jews to be put to death, and the Jews in their turn assassinated Amon the son of Manasseh, &c.

In the midst of these massacres, ten tribes were carried away into slavery by Salmanazar, king of Babylon, and dispersed for ever, except a few of the poorer sort of people, who were left to be vine dressers and husbandmen,

There were still two tribes remaining, who soon became slaves in their turn, and remained such during seventy years; at the expiration of that period, the two tribes obtained leave of their conquerors and masters to return to Jerusalem. These two tribes, as well as the few Jews who might be remaining in Samaria, and the strangers who were settled there, continued to be subject to the kings of Persia.

When Alexander made himself master of Persia, he included Judæa in his conquests. After the death of Alexander, the Jews were sometimes subject to the Seleucides, his successors in Syria, and sometimes to the Ptolemies, who succeeded him in Egypt. Under all these princes, the Jews were but little better than slaves, and supported themselves chiefly by carrying on the trade of

brokers in different parts of Asia. They obtained some favours from Ptolemy Epiphanes, king of Egypt. A Jew named Joseph, became collector general of the taxes in Lower Syria, and that part of Judæa which belonged to this Ptolemy. This is one of the most fortunate æras in the history of the Jews, for they were then enabled to build the third part of their city, which was called the inclosure of the Maccabees, because the Maccabees finished it.

From the yoke of king Ptolemy, they passed again to that of Antiochus, who was surnamed *the God*. As the Jews had found means to enrich themselves, they became more daring, and at length revolted against their master Antiochus. This happened at the time of the Maccabees, whose courage and heroic actions have been celebrated by the Jews of Alexandria; but the Maccabees could not hinder the general of Antiochus Eupator, son of Antiochus Epiphanes, from raising the walls of the temple, leaving only the sanctuary standing, and from cutting off the head of Onias the high-priest, who was considered as the author of the revolt.

Never were the Jews more inviolably attached to their law, than they were under the kings of Syria; they no longer adored strange gods; it was then that their religion was irrevocably fixed; and yet they were more unfortunate than ever: confiding in the promises of their prophets, and in the assistance of God, they were in continual expectation of their deliverance, and yet we find that they were abandoned by providence, whose decrees are always hid from mankind.

The intestine wars of the kings of Syria afforded them a little relief; but it was not long before they

they turned their arms against one another. As they had no kings, and the dignity of high priest was the highest, this post gave rise to different parties, and was disputed with great violence. It was impossible for any one to obtain this office without fighting for it, or to arrive at the sanctuary till he had destroyed all his opponents.

Hircan, of the family of the Maccabees, having been appointed high priest, though still considered as a subject of the Syrians, caused David's sepulchre to be opened, in which the exaggerating writer Josephus pretends they found three thousand talents. They ought to have sought for this pretended treasure when they were rebuilding the temple under Nehemias. This Hircan obtained of Antiochus Sidetes the privilege of coining money. But as there never was any Jewish coin, there is no great probability that the treasure contained in David's tomb was very considerable.

It is worthy of observation, that this high priest Hircan was a Sadducee, who believed neither in the immortality of the soul, nor in angels; a new subject of dispute which began to divide the Sadducees and Pharisees. The latter conspired against Hircan and were for condemning him to be imprisoned and whipped, but he revenged himself upon them, and governed despotically.

His son Aristobulus had the audacity to make himself king during the troubles of Syria and Egypt. He was a far more cruel tyrant than any of those that had oppressed the Jewish nation. It is true, he enforced the custom of praying in the temple, and of refraining from the use of pork, but he starved his mother to death, and caused his brother Antigonus to be assassinated. He had for his

his successor one named John, who was as wicked as himself.

This John, or Joannes, left two sons, Aristobulus and Hircan, who made war against each other. Aristobulus overpowered his brother and ascended the throne. The Romans were at that time employed in subjecting Asia. Pompey came to Jerusalem, seized on the temple, ordered many of the seditious inhabitants to be hanged up at the gates of the town, and the pretended king Aristobulus to be loaded with chains.

This Aristobulus had a son who dared to assume the name of Alexander. He excited a revolt, and raised a few troops, but was soon hanged by the order of Pompey.

In a word, Mark Anthony gave the Jews a king in the person of an Arabian, of the country of those Amalekites who are so execrated in the Jewish history. This was that same Herod who is spoken of by St. Matthew, as having destroyed all the little children in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, upon being told that a king of the Jews was born in that village, and that three magi, guided by a star, were come to offer him presents.

Thus we find that the Jews were always in subjection or in slavery. It is well known how they revolted against the Romans, and how Titus caused them all to be sold in the market at the price of the animal they refused to eat.

They experienced a still more unhappy fate under the emperors Trajan and Adrian, and they deserved it. During the reign of Trajan there happened an earthquake which swallowed up the finest cities of Syria. The Jews considering it as the signal of God's wrath against the Romans,
 assembled

affembled together, and taking up arms in Africa and Cyprus, were animated with so much fury, that they devoured the limbs of the Romans who happened to fall into their hands. But they who had been guilty of these excesses were soon brought to condign punishment. The rest of the nation were guilty of the same madness under Adrian, when Barochebas stiled himself their Messiah, and placed himself at their head. This fanaticism was extinguished in torrents of blood.

It is astonishing that there should still be Jews remaining. The famous Benjamin of Tudela, a learned rabbi, who in the twelfth century travelled through Europe and Asia, reckoned the number of Jews and Samaritans to be about three hundred and eighty thousand, exclusive of the pretended kingdom of Thema towards Thibet, where this Benjamin, either being deceived himself, or willing to deceive his readers on this subject, reports that three hundred thousand Jews of the ten ancient tribes were collected under one sovereign. Never were the Jews masters of any country since the days of Vespasian, if we except a few villages in the deserts of Arabia Felix, towards the Red Sea. Mahomet, at first, was obliged to keep fair with them. But in the end he destroyed the petty government they had established to the Northward of Mecca; and it is certain, that since his time they have never been collected into a body of people.

It is sufficient for us to trace the history of this petty people, the Jews, to be convinced that they could have no other end. They boast of their having quitted Egypt like a clan of banditti, who brought away every thing they had borrowed of the Egyptians. They boast likewise of their hav-
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ing never spared either age or sex in any of the villages or little towns of which they were able to get possession. They evince an irreconcilable hatred against all other nations. We see them rebelling against their masters; incessantly thirsting after the possessions of others; uniformly superstitious, ignorant, and barbarous; servile and crouching under misfortunes, and insolent in prosperity. This was the light in which the Jews appeared to the Greeks and Romans who were able to read their history: but in the eyes of Christians who are enlightened by the faith, they are considered as the heralds of Providence, and the harbingers of our salvation.

The two other nations who are wandering in the East like the Jews, and who like those people have allied themselves with no other nation, are the Banians, and the Parsis or Guebres. These Banians, who are devoted to commerce in the same manner as the Jews, are the descendants of the primitive, peaceable inhabitants of India, and have never mixed their blood with that of strangers any more than the Brachmans. The Parsis are the remains of those Persians who were formerly the rulers of the East, and the sovereigns of the Jews. They have been dispersed since the time of Omar, and now cultivate in peace a part of the earth where they formerly reigned. They are still faithful to the ancient religion of the Magi, adoring one only God, and keeping up the sacred fire, which they consider as the work and the emblem of the Divinity.

I shall say nothing here of those remains of the Egyptians, the secret adorers of Isis, who at present subsist only in a few vagrant families which will soon be for ever extinct.

Of

Of the Jewish Prophets.

FAR be it from us to confound the *Nabim*, the *Roheim* of the Hebrews, with the impostors of other nations. It is well known that God communicated himself only to the Jews, except in some particular cases, as for example, when he inspired Balaam, the prophet of Mesopotamia, and made him pronounce the contrary of what they wanted him to say. This Balaam was the prophet of another god, and yet it is not said that he is a false prophet*. We have already remarked that the Egyptian priests were prophets and seers. What meaning did they annex to this word? That of inspired. Sometimes the inspired person spoke of things that were past; sometimes he predicted what was to come; and very often he contented himself with speaking in a figurative style. This is the reason why St. Paul, in quoting the following verse from Aratus a Greek poet, seems to consider that poet as a prophet: "For in him we live, move, and have our being"†.

Was the title and quality of prophet a dignity among the Hebrews, or a particular office conferred by the law on certain elect persons, like the dignity of the Pythia at Delphos? No; the prophets were only those who had visions, or who felt themselves inspired. Hence it happened, that very often there arose false prophets, who fancied they were possessed by the spirit of God, and who were sometimes the cause of great misfortunes, as was the case with the prophets of the Cevennes at the beginning of the present century.

* Numbers, chap. xxii.

† The Acts of the Apostles, chap. xvii.

It was very difficult to distinguish the false prophets from the true. This was the reason why Manasseh, king of Judæa, put the prophet Isaiah to death. King Zedekiah was unable to determine between Jeremiah and Ananias, who predicted contrary things, and he therefore imprisoned Jeremiah. Ezekiel was killed by the Jews who were the companions of his slavery. Micaiah having prophesied misfortunes to Ahab king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah, another prophet, Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah, smote him upon the cheek, and said, "Which way went the spirit of the Lord from me to speak unto thee*." Hosea in his ninth chapter declares, "That the prophets are fools, and that the spiritual men are mad". The prophets treated each other as liars and visionaries. There was therefore no other way to distinguish truth from falsehood, than by waiting for the accomplishment of their predictions.

We are told, that when Elisha went to Damascus, Ben-hadad, the king of Syria, who was sick, sent him forty camels laden with presents to know if he should recover, and that Elisha answered, "Go, say unto him, thou mayest certainly recover; howbeit, the Lord hath shewed me that he shall surely die†." If Elisha had not been a prophet of the true God, we might have suspected him of having been guilty of an evasion on this occasion; for if the king had recovered it would have been allowed that Elisha had foretold his cure, when he said, "that he might certainly recover," and that he had not specified the time of his death. But as he had confirmed his mission

* 11 Chronicles, chap. xviii.

† 2 Kings, chap. viii.

by many striking miracles, his veracity is not to be doubted.

We shall not in this place enquire with the commentators, what the double spirit was which Elisha received from Elijah, nor what is the signification of the mantle Elijah gave to him just before he was taken up by a whirlwind to Heaven in a fiery chariot, drawn by horses of fire, like the car of Apollo, as described by the Greek poets. We shall not attempt to determine what is the type, or mystical sense of those forty two little children who, on seeing Elisha in the road leading up to Bethel, mocked him, and said to him "Go up thou bald head, go up"*; nor what is meant by his revenging himself as he did, by cursing them, and making two she bears appear who instantly devoured all those innocent creatures. All these facts are above our comprehension.

It is right to take notice here of an oriental custom which the Jews carried to a degree that astonishes us. This custom consisted not only in speaking by allegories, but even in expressing by singular actions the things they meant to signify. Nothing could be more natural than this custom was at that time, when mankind having been long accustomed to write their thoughts in hieroglyphics, would of course acquire a habit of speaking as they wrote.

Thus the Scythians (if we may believe Herodotus) sent a bird, a mouse, a frog, and five arrows to Darah, whom we call Darius. By these things they meant to say, that unless Darius fled with the quickness of a bird, or concealed him-

* 2 Kings, chap. xi.

self like a mouse and a frog, he would fall by their arrows. This tale may not be true, but at any rate it is a testimony of the symbols that were in use in those remote times.

Kings wrote to one another in ænigmas; we have instances of this in Hiram, Solomon, and the queen of Sheba. Tarquin the Proud, when consulted by his son in his garden concerning the manner in which he ought to act towards the Gabini, answered him only by beating down the poppies that had raised themselves above the other flowers. By this he meant to say, that it would be necessary to exterminate the great, and to spare the bulk of the people.

It is to these hieroglyphics that we are indebted for the fables, which were the earliest written compositions. Hence fables are of much greater antiquity than simple history.

They who are not well acquainted with the customs of remote times, will be shocked at some of the actions and ænigmatical discourses of the Jewish prophets.

Isaiah prophesying that king Ahaz shall be delivered in a few years from the king of Syria, and from the melk, or petty king of Samaria, who were combined against him, says to him, "Before
" a child shall know to refuse the evil, and chuse
" the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be
" forsaken of both her kings In the same
" day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is
" hired, both the head and the hair of the feet *,
" and shall also consume the beard †." Then the

* By the word *feet*, the prophet, after his figurative manner, means the *penis*. V.

† Isaiah, chap. vii.

prophet takes two witnesses, Zechariah and Uriah, and goes to bed to the prophetess, who conceives and brings forth a son, to whom the Lord gives the name of *Maher-shalal-hash-baz* *, which signifies *divide quickly the spoils*; and the prophet meant by this that the spoils of the enemy would soon be divided.

I shall not attempt to investigate all the allegorical and infinitely respectable meanings that have been ascribed to this prophecy; I shall confine myself to a few remarks on those customs which seem astonishing to us moderns.

The same Isaiah speaks of himself as walking naked and barefoot three years in Jerusalem †, as a sign that the Egyptians should be subdued by the king of Babylon.

What! is it possible, the reader will naturally exclaim, that a man could be permitted to walk naked about the streets of Jerusalem without being taken notice of by the magistrates? Yes, without doubt. Diogenes was not the only one of the ancients who had the boldness to do the same thing; Strabo, in his fifteenth book, tells us, that in India there was a sect of Brachmans who would have been ashamed to have been seen with cloathing. Even at this day there are penitents in India who go naked, loaded with chains and wearing an iron ring about their penis, in order to expiate the sins of the people. There are similar sects in Africa and Turkey. Their manners are very different from ours, and I do not believe that at the time of Isaiah there was a single custom similar to any that are in use at present.

* Isaiah, chap. viii. † Ibid. chap. xx.

Jeremiah was only fourteen years old when he received the gift of prophecy. God put forth his hand and touched his mouth*, because he had some difficulty of speech. One of the first things he saw was a boiling pot, the face of which was towards the North†. This pot represented the people who were to come from the North; and the boiling water denoted the misfortunes of Jerusalem.

After this we find him purchasing a linen girdle, which he puts upon his loins, and then, by the order of God, goes and hides it in a hole near the Euphrates‡. A few days afterwards the Lord orders him to "Arise and go to the Euphrates, and take the girdle from thence which he had commanded him to hide there." Jeremiah accordingly went and dug up the girdle, but found that it was rotten. He then explains to us this parable, by saying, the pride of Jerusalem will be marred.

In another place §, we find the Lord ordering him to make bonds and yokes, to put them upon his neck, to send them to the neighbouring kings, and to warn them to submit to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, in whose favour he prophesies.

Ezekiel may surprise the reader still more; he threatens the Jews that fathers shall eat their children, and children their fathers ||. But before he delivers this prophecy, he sees four animals sparkling like fire **, and four wheels full of eyes; he eats a roll of parchment ††; and they bind him with chains ‡‡. He sketches a plan of

* Jeremiah, chap. i.

† Ibid.

‡ Chap. xiii.

§ Chap. xvii.

|| Ezekiel, chap. v.

** Chap. i.

†† Chap. iii.

‡‡ Ibid.

Jerusalem upon a tile ; he puts an iron pan as a wall between himself and the city, and he sleeps three hundred and ninety days upon his left side, and forty days upon his right side*. The Lord orders him to take wheat and barley, and beans, and lentils, and millet, and fitches, and cover them with human excrements: "For thus, says he, shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, whither I will drive them †." But after he has eaten of this bread of sorrow, God allows him to cover it only with cows dung.

He then cuts off his hair and his beard, and after weighing the hair divides it into three parts, one of these he puts into the fire, another he cuts about the city with a sword, and the third he scatters in the wind.

This same Ezekiel has other allegories that are still more wonderful.

He introduces the Lord, who says, § "In the day thou was born, thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee: thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all Thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown When I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold thy time was the time of love, and I spread my skirt over thee and covered thee I shod thee with badgers skins, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put

* Ezekiel, chap. iv.

† Ibid.

§ Chap. xvi.
"bracelets

“ bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on
 “ thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead,
 “ and ear-rings in thine ears, and a beautiful
 “ crown upon thy head But thou didst
 “ trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the
 “ harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst
 “ out thy fornications on every one that passed
 “ by Thou hast taken thy fair jewels
 “ and didst commit whoredom with them
 “ Thou hast built thy high places at every head
 “ of the way, and hast opened thy legs to every
 “ one that passed by Thou hast also com-
 “ mitted fornication with the Egyptians thy
 “ neighbours Thou hast played the whore
 “ also with the Assyrians because thou wast in-
 “ satiable ; yea, thou hast played the harlot with
 “ them and yet could not be satisfied
 “ They give gifts to all whores, but thou givest
 “ thy gifts to all thy lovers, and hirest them,
 “ that they may come unto thee on every side
 “ for thy whoredom, &c.”

“ Aholah * played the harlot when she was
 “ mine, and she doted on her lovers who were
 “ cloathed with blue, captains and rulers, all of
 “ them desirable young men, horsemen riding
 “ upon horses Neither left she her whore-
 “ doms brought from Egypt ; for in her youth
 “ they lay with her and they bruised the breasts
 “ of her virginity, and poured their——upon
 “ her. . . . Her sister Aholibah was more cor-
 “ rupt in her inordinate love than she, and in
 “ her whoredoms more than her sister in her
 “ whoredoms . . . for she doated upon those

* Ezekiel, chap. xxiii.

“ paramours

"paramours who had . . . like asses, and who
 " . . . like horses."

These expressions appear to us to be very vulgar and indecent, but they were not considered as such by the Jews; they signified the apostacies of Jerusalem and Samaria. These apostacies were very often represented as a fornication or as an adultery. But we must not judge of the manners, customs, and modes of expression of the ancients by our own, since they differ as widely from each other as the French language differs from the Chaldæan or the Arabic.

Hosea begins his prophecies * by telling us, that the Lord ordered him to marry a prostitute and that he obeyed. This prostitute conceived and bare him a son whom the Lord called Jezreel; this is a type of the house of Jehu, which was to perish, because Jehu had killed Joram in Jezreel. After this † God commands Hosea to espouse an adulteress who is beloved by another, in the same manner as the Lord loves the children of Israel, who have gone a whoring after strange gods. In the prophecy of Amos ‡, God threatens the cows of Samaria, that he will drive them into the cauldron. In a word, the whole is different from our manners and mode of thinking; and if we examine the manners of all the oriental nations, we shall find them equally unlike ours, not only in the most remote times, but even now when we are better acquainted with them.

Of the Prayers of the Jews.

We are in possession of very few of the prayers of the most ancient nations. Two or three that

* Hosea, chap. i.

† Ibid. chap. iii.

‡ Amos, chap. iv.

were used in the mysteries, and the ancient prayer to Isis, preserved by Apuleius, are the only ones that are extant. The Jews have preserved all theirs.

If we may conjecture the disposition of a nation by the prayers they offer up to God, we may easily perceive that the Jews were a blood thirsty people. In their Psalms they seem to wish rather for the death than the conversion of a sinner; and in the oriental style we find them requesting of the Lord all the good things of this world.

“Thou waterest the hills from above: the earth is filled with the fruit of thy works.

“Thou bringest forth grass for the cattle, and green herb for the service of men. Thou bringest food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man; and oil to make him a chearful countenance; and bread to strengthen man’s heart.” Psalm civ.

“Judah is my lawgiver, Moab is my wash pot, over Edom will I cast my shoe.” Ps. cviii.

But we must confess that the Jews execrate their enemies in a style equally figurative.

“Desire of me, and I will give the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession.

“Thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron: and break them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” Psalm ii.

“Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my strength.

“... O pluck me not away, neither destroy me with the ungodly. . . . Reward them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their own inventions.” Ps. xxviii.

“Let my enemies be put to confusion, and be put to silence in the grave.” Psalm xxxi.

“Plead

“ Plead thou my cause, O Lord, with them
 “ that strive with me; and fight thou against
 “ them that fight against me.

“ Lay hand upon thy shield and buckler, and
 “ stand up to help me. Bring forth thy spear
 “ and stop the way against them. . . . Let
 “ them be as dust before the wind, and the an-
 “ gel of the Lord scattering them. Let their
 “ way be dark and slippery, and let the angel
 “ of the Lord persecute them. For they have
 “ privily laid a net to destroy me. . . . Yea
 “ they have made a pit for my soul. . . . Let
 “ their nets they have laid privily catch them-
 “ selves; that they may fall into their own mis-
 “ chief. . . . And all my bones shall say, Lord,
 “ who is like unto thee.” Psalm xxxv.

“ Break their teeth, O God, in their mouths,
 “ strike the jaw bones of these lions.” Psalm lviii.

“ They shall grin like a dog, and go about
 “ the city. They shall run here and there for
 “ meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied.”
 Psalm lix.

“ Let God arise, and let his enemies be scat-
 “ tered. . . . Like as the smoke vanisheth, so
 “ shalt thou drive them away. . . . Thy foot
 “ shall be dipped in the blood of thine enemies,
 “ and the tongues of thy dogs shall be red
 “ through the same.” Psalm lxviii.

“ Lord pour out thy indignation upon the
 “ heathen that have not known thee.” Psalm
 lxxix.

“ Do unto them as unto the Midianites. . . .
 “ O my God make them like unto a wheel, and
 “ as a stubble before the wind. Like as the fire
 “ that burneth up the wood, and as the flame
 “ that consumeth the mountains.” Psalm lxxxiii.

" Set thou an ungodly man to be ruler over him, and let Satan stand at his right hand.

" When sentence is given upon him let him be condemned; and let his prayer be turned into sin.

" Let his days be few Let his children be fatherless and his wife a widow. Let his children be vagabonds and beg their bread; let them seek it also out of desolate places.

" Let the extortioner consume all that he hath, and let the stranger spoil his labour. Let there be no man to pity him, nor to have compassion upon his fatherless children.

" Let his posterity be destroyed Let the wickedness of his fathers be had in remembrance, and let not the sin of his mother be done away Curses shall come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones. . . . Let it thus happen, O Lord, unto my enemies. But deal with me, O God, according to thy name, for sweet is thy mercy." Psalm cix.

" The plowers plowed upon my back and made long furrows.

" But the Lord hath hewn the ungodly in pieces.

" Let them be confounded and turned backwards, as many as have evil will at Sion.

" Let them be even as the grass upon the house tops." Psalm cxxix.

" Blessed shall he be that taketh thy little children and throweth them against the stones." Psalm cxxxvii.

These few specimens are sufficient to shew, that if God had granted all the prayers of his people, there would have been no inhabitants but Jews left upon earth; for they detested all other nations,

tions, they were in their turn equally detested; and in thus, incessantly imploring the Lord to exterminate all whom they hated, they seemed to ask for the destruction of all the world. But it ought to be had in remembrance, that the Jews were not only the chosen people of God, but likewise the instruments of his vengeance. It was through them that he punished other nations, in the same manner as he made use of those nations to punish his own people. We are now no longer allowed to offer up the same prayers, or to implore the Lord to destroy mothers and children at the breast, and to dash them against the stones. God being now acknowledged to be the common father of all mankind, no nation makes use of such imprecations against their neighbours. We were formerly as cruel as the Jews; but altho' we still continue to sing their psalms, yet we do not now turn the meaning of them against the people who are at war with us. This is one of the great advantages that the mild doctrines of the gospel have over the Jewish-law. And would to God, that with this same gospel in our hands, and so many divine prayers in our hearts, we had not shed the blood of our brethren and desolated the earth in the name of the God of mercy!

Of Josephus, the Jewish Historian.

IT is by no means strange that the history of Flavius Josephus should have met with opponents, when it appeared in Rome. It is true, there were but few copies of it; it would employ the most dexterous copyist at least three months in transcribing it. Books at that time were very
scarce

scarce and very dear; and few Romans condescended to read the annals of a slavish people, who were held in equal contempt by persons of every rank. Yet it appears from the answer of Josephus to Appion, that he met with a small number of readers, and it is evident likewise, that this small number considered him as a false and visionary writer.

If we imagine ourselves in the situation of the Romans at the time of Titus, we shall easily conceive with how much contempt, and even horror, those conquerors of the known world, and the legislators of nations, would regard the history of the Jews. Those Romans could hardly be supposed to know that Josephus had borrowed the greater part of his facts from the sacred writings which were dictated by the Holy Ghost; nor could they have been informed that Josephus had added many things to the Bible, and passed many parts of it over in silence. They could not know that he had taken many points of his history from the third book of Esdras, and that this book of Esdras is one of those that are deemed apocryphal.

What would a Roman senator think, after the perusal of these oriental tales?—Josephus, in the twelfth chapter of his tenth book, relates that Darius the son of Astyages, made the prophet Daniel governor of three hundred and sixty cities, at a time when he forbade any one, under pain of death, to pray to God for the space of a month. It is certain that the Bible makes no mention of Daniel's governing three hundred and sixty towns.

Josephus seems to suppose that all Persia was converted to Judaism. The same writer gives a singular

singular origin to the second temple of the Jews, which was built by Zorobabel.

"Zorobabel," says he, "was the intimate friend of king Darius." Now, to pretend that a Jewish slave was an intimate friend of the king of kings, is the same thing as if one of our historians were to assert, that a fanatic of the Cevennes, just delivered from the gallies, was the intimate friend of Louis XIV.

Be it as it will, if we are to believe Flavius Josephus, Darius, who was a prince of a great deal of wit, proposed a question to his courtiers, worthy of our jest books, and this was, which of the three is the most powerful, wine, kings, or women? He who gave the best answer, was to have a flaxen crown, a purple robe, and a collar of gold, and was to drink out of a golden cup, to lie upon a bed of gold, to be carried in a chariot of gold, drawn by horses with harnesses of gold, and moreover, was to have the title of cousin to the king.

Darius then seated himself upon his throne, to hear the answers of his academy of wits. One spoke much in favour of wine, another said many things to prove the superior power of kings; Zorobabel took the part of the ladies. There is nothing, says he, so powerful as a fine woman, for I have seen Apamea, my lord the king's mistress, give his sacred majesty little boxes on the ear, and take off the turban from his head, in order to put it upon her own.

Darius was so much pleased with Zorobabel's answer, that he immediately gave orders for rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem.

These idle tales which Josephus combined with the sacred writings, could not fail to depreciate in

the eyes of the pagans, the great truths which the Bible contains. The Romans could not possibly distinguish the parts that had been added by Josephus, from those which he had drawn from a sacred source. The Bible, which we so justly deem holy, was either wholly unknown to the Romans, or as much despised by them as Josephus himself was. The appearance of the angels to the patriarchs, the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, the ten plagues of Egypt, the inconceivable increase of the Jews in so short a space of time, and in so inconsiderable a territory, in a word, all the prodigies that signalized that obscure nation, were treated with that contempt which a people who had conquered so many nations, and who were masters of the world, would naturally feel for a petty people reduced to slavery.

Josephus was aware, that the things he wrote would be but ill-received by profane authors; in several parts of his book, he says, "The reader is to think as he pleases of this matter." He seems fearful of disgusting his readers, and thus lessens the faith that is due to miracles. At almost every page of his work, we may perceive that he is ashamed of being a Jew, even when he is exerting himself to render his nation respectable in the opinion of their conquerors. The Romans, therefore, who had only common sense, and who were not enlightened by the true religion, are by no means blameable for having considered the historian Josephus as a contemptible slave, who told them ridiculous stories, in order to get a little money from his masters. Let us bless God, that we who have the happiness to be more enlightened than the Tituses, the Trajans, the

the Antoninuses, or any others of the Romans our masters, are enabled to distinguish between the absurd fables of Josephus, and the sublime truths contained in the sacred writings.

Of a Falseness of Flavius Josephus, concerning Alexander and the Jews.

WHEN Alexander (who was chosen by the Greeks, in the same manner as his father, and in more remote times Agamemnon had been, to revenge their cause in Asia) had gained the battle of Issus, he made himself master of Syria, one of the provinces of Darius. After these successes, he was desirous to get possession of Egypt, before he crossed the Euphrates and Tigris, and by so doing, to deprive Darius of all the ports that might be able to furnish him with shipping. In order to accomplish this design, which was worthy of a great general, it was necessary that he should lay siege to Tyre. This city was under the protection of the king of Persia, and at that time sovereign of the sea. Alexander took it after an obstinate siege of seven months, during which he displayed as much generalship as courage. The dyke he caused to be constructed in the sea, is still considered as the model which ought to be followed by all generals in similar enterprizes. It was by imitating Alexander, if we may be allowed to compare small things with great, that the duke of Parma took Antwerp, and Cardinal Richelieu Rochelle. Rollin indeed pretends that Alexander took Tyre, only because that city had insulted the Jews, and God was willing to avenge the honor of his people. But Alexander might have other reasons;

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after he had got possession of Tyre, it was necessary that he should lose no time in making himself master of Pelusium, and accordingly we find him making a forced march to surprize Gaza, from whence he led his troops to Pelusium in seven days. This is what we read in Arrian, Quintus Curtius, Diodorus, and even in Paulus Orosius, all of whom relate it from Alexander's journal.

But what does Josephus assert, in order to raise the credit of his nation, which having been subject to the Persians, was fallen, together with the rest of Syria, under the dominion of Alexander, by whom it was afterwards honoured with some few privileges? He pretends that Alexander, when in Macedonia, had seen Jaddus, a high priest of the Jews, in a dream, (supposing that there really was a Jewish priest, whose name ended in *us*,) who had encouraged him to engage in an expedition against the Persians, and that this was the reason of his attacking Asia. He pretends likewise, that after the taking of Tyre, Alexander went five or six days journey out of his road, in order to visit Jerusalem, and that as the high priest Jaddus had formerly appeared in a dream to Alexander, so he now received an order from God to go and salute that monarch; that he obeyed, and went in procession, cloathed in his pontifical habit, and followed by all his Levites, in their surplices, to meet Alexander, who the moment he saw Jaddus, recollected that he was the person he had seen seven or eight years before in a dream, and acknowledged this to Parmenion; that Jaddus wore a cap ornamented with a plate of gold, upon which an Hebrew word was engraven; that Alexander, who without doubt understood Hebrew, finding it to be

be the word Jehovah, immediately prostrated himself upon the earth, well knowing that this was the name of God; that Jaddus then shewed him the prophecies which had foretold that Alexander would make himself master of the whole Persian empire, (for we are not to suppose that these prophecies were written after the event;) and that he assured him, that God had chosen him to rule over his chosen people, in the same manner as he had formerly chosen Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus. This absurd story ought not, I think, to have been copied by Rollin, as if it had been attested by a sacred writer; yet in this way, both ancient and modern history has too often been written.

Of the popular Prejudices to which the sacred Writers have condescended to conform.

THE books of the Old and New Testament were written to inculcate morality, and not to teach natural philosophy.

The ancients considered the serpent as the most cunning of all animals, and the author of the Pentateuch is pleased to say that the serpent was sufficiently crafty to seduce Eve. The faculty of speech was sometimes attributed to beasts, and we find the sacred writer recording the speeches of the serpent and of Balaam's ass. Several Jews and many Christian doctors have considered this history as an allegory; but whether it be real or emblematical, it is equally respectable. The stars were supposed to be points in the clouds, the divine author adapts his expressions to this popular notion, and says that the moon was made to rule over the stars.

Rakiak

The common opinion was, that the heavens were solid; they were called in Hebrew *rakiak*, which signifies a plate of metal, or a firm and extended substance, which we have translated by the word *firmament*. This firmament was supposed to inclose waters, which occasionally flowed through certain openings, and accordingly we find this philosophy adopted in the Bible.

The Indians, Chaldæans, and Persians imagined that God had formed the world in six periods. The author of Genesis, that he might not disgust the weakness of the Jews, tells us, that God created the world in six days, although a word and an instant would have been sufficient for his omnipotence. A garden and shady bowers were considered as the greatest blessings in a dry country scorched by the sun; hence the divine Author places the first man in a garden.

They had no idea of a being purely immaterial; God is constantly represented as a man; we read of his walking in the garden, of his speaking and being spoken to.

The word *ruah* or *soul* signifies the breath or life, and in the Pentateuch the word *soul* is constantly used to signify life.

They believed the existence of giants, and in Genesis we are told that they were the children of angels and of the daughters of men.

Nobody was acquainted with the nature of the rainbow; it was supposed to be something preternatural, and Homer always considers it in this light. The Holy Bible styles it the bow of the Almighty, the token of his covenant.

Among a number of errors to which mankind have been subject, they thought that it was possible to produce animals of any colour they pleased,

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Ruach

pleased, by placing the colour they wished for before the eyes of the female at the time she conceived: the author of Genesis tells us, that Jacob procured spotted cattle by an artifice of this kind.

All the ancients made use of charms against the bite of serpents; and when the wound was not mortal, or was fortunately cured by the charlatans, who were named *Psilles*; or in short, when suitable topics had been applied with success, they were then convinced that the charm had taken effect. Moses constructed a serpent of brass, the sight of which cured those who had been bit by real serpents; thus God changed a popular error into a new truth.

One of the most ancient errors was the opinion, that bees might be generated in a dead body that was beginning to putrify. This notion was founded on their every day seeing the dead bodies of animals covered with flies and maggots. This deception led them to consider corruption as the principle of generation. When they were persuaded that a dead body produces flies, they were easily led to believe that a certain means of procuring bees, was to prepare the bloody skins of animals, in a manner requisite for this metamorphosis. They did not know, or they did not reflect, how averse bees are to putrid flesh, and how pernicious any thing infectious is to these insects. This supposed method of producing bees could not possibly succeed; but they attributed their failure to some mistake in the process. Virgil, in the fourth book of his Georgics, says, that this operation was successfully performed by Aristæus, but at the same time styles it a miracle, *mirabile monstrum*.

In support of this ancient prejudice, it is related of Samson, that he found a swarm of bees in the throat of the lion he had killed a few days before.

It was likewise believed, that the adder stopp'd his ears, that he might not hear the voice of the enchanter. Thus we find the Psalmist conforming to this error in the 58th Psalm, where he says; "They are even like the deaf adder, that stoppeth her ears; and which refuseth to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely."

The ancient opinion that women make wine and milk turn sour, and destroy the young pigeons in pigeon houses, during the time of their menstruation, still subsists among the common people, as well as a belief in the moons influence on this occasion. This periodical purgation in woman was supposed to be an evacuation of impure blood, and it was believed that a man who had carnal knowledge of his wife at this critical time, must necessarily beget leprous and deformed children. The Jews were so convinced of the truth of this opinion, that by the Levitical law, the man and woman who should be guilty of this supposed sin, were condemned to suffer death*.

In short, so conformable are all the sacred writings to the vulgar prejudices of the times, that we find our Saviour himself saying, that no man putteth new wine into old bottles, and that the feed must rot before it can ripen.

St. Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, chap. xv. endeavouring to prove the resurrection

* Leviticus, chap. xx.

of the body, has the following expression: "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die," and yet it is now well known that the seed neither dies nor rots in the earth before it vegetates; and that if it were to rot, it would not grow: but in those days, mankind had adopted this erroneous notion, and the inspired writers condescended to derive useful comparisons from it. This is what St. Jerome calls arguing œconomically.

No sooner was the doctrine of devils established, than all convulsive diseases were considered as the works of dæmons. The Romans, as well as the Greeks, gave the name of *morbus sacer*, or *sacred disease* to the epilepsy. Melancholy accompanied by a kind of madness, was another complaint of which the cause was unknown; they who were attacked with it, wandered all night among the tombs, howling like wolves. They were called Dæmoniacs, and by the Greeks *Lycanthropi*. We find these Dæmoniacs spoken of in scripture.

Among the ancient Greeks, guilty persons were often tormented by furies; they had reduced Orestes to such a state of despair, that in one of his fits he devoured one of his fingers. They likewise afflicted Alcæon, Eteocles and Poly-nices. The Jews, when they became acquainted with the opinions of the Greeks, likewise adopted the belief of furies or devils who tormented mankind. It is true that the Sadducees did not acknowledge the existence of devils, but they were admitted by the Pharisees a little before the reign of Herod. At that time, there were exorcists among the Jews, who cast out devils, by placing a certain root under the nose of those who were possessed, and repeating at the same time a prayer
taken

taken from a pretended book of Solomon. In short, they were so accustomed to the driving out of devils, that according to St. Matthew, our Saviour himself, when accused by the Pharisees, of casting them out through Beelzebub the prince of the devils, allows that the Jews have the same power, and asks them whether they derive it from Beelzebub.

It is certain, that if those same Jews who put Jesus to death, were able to operate such miracles, and the Pharisees really cast out devils, they performed the same wonders as our Saviour himself did; they had the gift that Jesus communicated to his disciples; and if they had not, Jesus conformed himself to a popular prejudice, by condescending to suppose that his implacable enemies, whom he called a race of vipers, had the gift of miracles, and the power of lording it over devils. It is true, that neither the Jews nor the Christians are any longer in possession of this privilege which was for a long time so common. We have still indeed exorcists, but we no longer see either devils, or persons possessed by devils, so greatly have things changed with time! It was right in those days, that there should be persons possessed, and without doubt it is equally proper that there should be no longer any at present. The prodigies necessary to rear a divine edifice, become useless the moment it is firmly established. Every thing in this world has changed except virtue, and that alone has never varied, but resembles the light of the sun, which seems to have hardly any of the properties of known matter, but remains pure and immutable, while all the elements are incessantly intermixing. We need
only

only open our eyes, in order to bless its divine author.

Of Angels, Genii, and Devils, amongst the ancient Nations, and amongst the Jews.

AS men in power, magistrates and princes had their messengers, it seemed probable that the gods likewise had theirs. The Chaldæans and Persians seem to have been the first who made any mention of angels. The Parfis who still subsist, communicated to the learned author of the religion of the ancient Parfis *, the names of the angels which those people acknowledged. They amount to an hundred and nineteen, but in this number, the names neither of Raphael nor Gabriel are included, for these two were not adopted by the Persians till long afterwards. These words are Chaldæan, and were unknown to the Jews, till the time of their captivity, for before the history of Tobias, we do not see the name of any angel mentioned either in the Pentateuch, or in any other of the Hebrew books.

The Persians, in the ancient catalogue which we find prefixed to the Sadder, reckoned only twelve devils, and the first of these was Arimanes. It was at least some consolation to reflect that the number of good spirits so greatly exceeded that of the dæmons, who were enemies to mankind.

It does not appear that this doctrine was adopted by the Egyptians. The Greeks instead of tutelary spirits, had their secondary divinities, their heroes and demi-gods; and in lieu of devils,

* Hyde *de Religione Veterum Persarum.*

their Ate, Erynnis, and the Eumenides. Plato seems to have been the first who spoke of a good and a bad genius, as presiding over the actions of every mortal. After his time, the Greeks and the Romans piqued themselves on having each two geniuses; and the evil one had constantly more employment, and was more successful than his antagonist.

When the Jews had given names to their heavenly host, they divided it into ten classes of the saints, the rapid, the strong, the flames, the sparks, the deputies, the princes, the sons of princes, the images, and the animated. But this hierarchy is to be met with only in the Talmud and the Targum. There is no mention made of it in the Bible. These angels always assumed the human form, and our painters still continue to delineate them in this shape, with the addition only of wings. Raphael conducted Tobias. The angels who appeared to Abraham and Lot, ate and drank with those patriarchs; and the brutal appetite of the inhabitants of Sodom, proves but too clearly that Lot's angels were formed like men. It would indeed be difficult to conceive how angels could have conversed with mankind, and how these could have answered them, if they had not appeared in a human shape.

The Jews had no other idea even of God himself. He is described as conversing with Adam and Eve, and even with the serpent. We are told of his walking in the garden of Eden at noon-day; and of his condescending to converse with Moses, Abraham and the patriarchs. More than one commentator has been of opinion that the words in Genesis, "Let us make man in our
" own

"own image, after our likeness," ought to be understood in a literal sense, and that as the most perfect of terrestrial beings is a feeble resemblance of his maker, this idea ought to encourage him not to degenerate.

Although the fall of the angels, and their transformation into devils, is the foundation both of the Jewish and Christian religions, yet there is nothing said of it either in Genesis, or in any other book of Moses. In Genesis we find it expressly mentioned, that a serpent spoke to Eve and seduced her. At the same time we are told, that of all animals, the serpent is the most artful and cunning; and we have already observed, that all the ancient nations entertained this opinion of that reptile. In the same book we are informed, that "The Lord said unto the serpent, "because thou hast done this, thou art cursed "above all cattle, and above every beast of the "field, upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust "shalt thou eat all the days of thy life, and I "will put enmity between thee and the woman, "and between thy seed and her seed; it shall "bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his "heel*." It is certain however, that the serpent does not feed upon dust, altho' all the ancients thought it did.

This would seem to have been a proper opportunity for informing mankind, that this same serpent, who thus came to exercise his revenge upon God's works, was one of those rebellious angels who were changed into dæmons. And yet there is not a single passage in the Pentateuch from which we can infer any such meaning.

* Genesis, chap. iii.

Satan is represented in Job as the master of the earth, subordinate to God. But he must be but little versed in antiquity, who does not know that this word Satan was of Chaldæan etymology, and was the Arimapes or evil spirit of the Persians, which had been adopted by the Chaldæans. Job is described as an Arabian shepherd, who lived on the confines of Persia. We have already remarked, that the Arabic words that are preserved in the Hebrew translation of this ancient allegory, sufficiently prove it to have been originally written in Arabic. Flavius Josephus who does not reckon it among the books of the Hebrew law, sufficiently removes every doubt on this subject.

The devils driven from heaven, precipitated into the center of our globe, and escaping from their prison, in order to tempt mankind, have for many ages been considered as the authors of our damnation. But once more, give me leave to remark, that there are no traces of this opinion to be found in the Old Testament. It is a traditional truth.

Several commentators have supposed that the passage in Isaiah, where he says, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, star of the morning?" Alludes to the fall of the angels, and that it was this same Lucifer, who in the shape of a serpent, tempted Eve and her husband to eat the apple.

But in truth, so strange an allegory resembles those ænigmas which were formerly proposed to the students in our colleges. They shewed them, for instance, a picture representing an old man and a young girl. One said it was winter and spring; another that it was snow and fire; a third

explained it by the rose and the thorn, while a fourth supposed it to mean strength and weakness: and he who had given the most extraordinary explanation, or in other words, who had discovered a meaning the most remote from the subject, gained the prize.

The case is precisely the same with this singular application of the star of the morning to the devil. Isaiah, in his fourteenth chapter, where he is rejoicing at the death of a king of Babylon, says to him, "The whole earth is at rest and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. Hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming; it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the chiefs of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy riots: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O *Helel*, star of the morning, how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nation."

Helel has been rendered in Latin by the word *Lucifer*, and this name has since been given to the devil, although there is certainly but little affinity between the devil and the star of the morning. It has been imagined that this devil being a star fallen from heaven, was an angel who had warred against God: he could not do this alone, he was therefore supposed to have had companions. The
fable

fable of the giants, who waged war with the gods, which was adopted by so many ancient nations, is considered by many of the commentators as a profane imitation of the tradition, which teaches us that the angels rebelled against their master. This idea received new weight from the epistle of St. Jude, where he says, "And the
 " angels which kept not their first estate, but left
 " their own habitation, God hath reserved in
 " everlasting chains under darkness, unto the
 " judgment of the great day Woe unto
 " them, for they have gone in the way of Cain ;
 " And Enoch also, the seventh from
 " Adam, prophesied of these, saying, behold
 " the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his
 " saints, &c."

Enoch was supposed to have written the history of the fall of angels. But there are two important observations to be made here. The first is, that Enoch did not write any more than Seth, to whom the Jews ascribed several books; and the false Enoch quoted by St. Jude, is known to have been forged by a Jew*. The second is,

* This book of Enoch however, must be of some antiquity, for we find it quoted more than once in the testament of the twelve patriarchs, another Jewish book, retouched by a Christian of the first century; and this testament of the twelve patriarchs is even quoted by St. Paul in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians, if repeating a passage, word for word, can be called a quotation. In the sixth chapter of the Testament of the Patriarch Reuben, we find the following expression, "The wrath of God cometh on
 " the children of disobedience." St. Paul makes use of the same words. It is observable that these twelve testaments differ in many respects from the book of Genesis. Judah's adventure with his daughter, for instance, is not related in the same manner. The testament of Reuben is singular

that this Enoch does not say a word of the rebellion, and the fall of angels before the creation of man. Here is word for word what he says in his *Egregori*,

“ The number of men being prodigiously increased, they had very beautiful daughters, with whom the angels or guardians (*Egregori*,) fell in love, so as to be led into many errors. They encouraged one another, by saying, let us choose for ourselves wives among the daughters of men. Semiaxas their prince said to them, I fear that you will not have courage to accomplish such a design, and that I alone shall remain charged with the crime. Upon which they all answered, let us bind ourselves by an oath, to execute our design, and may we be accursed if we fail therein. They then joined together in an oath, and in making imprecations. They were two hundred in number. They set out together at the time of Jared, and went up to the mountain which is called Hermonim, on account of their oath. The names of their leaders are as follows, Semiaxas, Atarculph, Arakiel, Chobabiel, Hofsampfich, Zakiel, Parmar, Thausaël, Samiel, Tiriël, and Sumiël.

“ These and the rest took to themselves wives in the year eleven hundred and seventy from the creation of the world. From this commerce were produced three kinds of men, the giants *Naphilim*, &c.”

singular in admitting seven senses in man, instead of five. All these patriarchs repent of their having sold their brother Joseph. V.

The

The author of this fragment writes in the style which seems peculiar to the primitive ages; we observe in it the same artless manner. He does not fail to name the personages; he is attentive to dates, but introduces no maxims or reflections, and this was exactly the ancient oriental mode of writing.

hap. VI This history is evidently founded on the sixth chapter of Genesis, where it is said, "When men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair, and they took them wives of all which they chose. And there were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them; the same became mighty men, which were of old, men of renown."

The books of Enoch and Genesis are entirely agreed concerning this commerce of the angels with the daughters of men, and the race of giants they produced. But neither this Enoch, nor any book of the Old Testament makes any mention of the war of the angels against God, of their defeat, and fall into hell, or of their hatred towards the human race.

There is nothing said either of the devil or of evil spirits, except in the book of Job, which, as we have already said, is not to be considered as a Jewish book, and in the adventure of Tobias. The devil *Asmodeus* or *Shammadey*, who strangled Sara's * seven first husbands, and whom Raphael drove away with the fumes of the heart and liver

* Tobit, chap. vii.

of a fish, was a Persian and not a Jewish devil. Raphael went and bound him in Upper Egypt; but as the Jews had no hell, they could have no devils. It was not till the sect of the Pharisees prevailed, that they began to believe in a hell, and the immortality of the soul. They were therefore far from supposing that the serpent that tempted Eve was a devil or fallen angel. This stone which serves as a foundation to the whole edifice, was the last that was laid. We are not the less disposed however, to reveré this history of the fall of the angels, and their change into devils; but we know not where to find its origin.

Belzebub, Belphegor and Astaroth, are considered as devils; but these were the ancient gods of Syria. Belphegor was the god of marriage; Belzebub, or Bel-se-buth, signified the Lord who preserves us from insects. Even king Ahaziah sent to consult him as a god, to know whether he should recover of the disease under which he laboured; and Elijah provoked at this step, said to him, "Is there no god in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron?"

Astaroth was the moon, and the moon little expected to be changed into a devil.

The apostle Jude says, that Michael the archangel disputed with the devil about the body of Moses, but we do not find any such circumstance mentioned in the Old Testament. This dispute of Michael with the devil, is to be met with only in an apocryphal book entitled the *Analyyses of Moses*, which is quoted by Origenes in the third book of his *Principia*.

It is therefore indisputable, that the Jews acknowledged no devils till about the time of their captivity in Babylon. They were indebted for

this doctrine to the Persians, who derived it from Zoroaster.

None but the ignorant and fanatical can deny all these facts, which can by no means injure the cause of religion. God was certainly pleased to permit that the doctrine of good and evil spirits, of the immortality of the soul, and of rewards and punishments after death, should be established among twenty of the most ancient nations in the world, before it was adopted by the Jews. Our holy religion hath consecrated this doctrine; it has clearly established what had been only imperfectly seen by those people, so that what was merely a matter of opinion among the ancients, is by the help of revelation become a divine truth.

Whether the Jews instructed other Nations, or whether they were instructed by them.

THE sacred writings having never determined whether the Jews were the instructors or the disciples of other nations, we may be allowed to examine this question.

Philo, in the account he gives us of his mission to Caligula, begins by saying, "That the word Israel is a Chaldæan term, signifying, *seeing God*, and that it was applied by the Chaldæans to those who were consecrated to the Divinity." This seems sufficiently to prove that the Jews did not begin to give the name of Israel to Jacob, or to call themselves Israelites, till they were acquainted with the Chaldæan language; and of this they could have no knowledge till they were in slavery at Babylon, for it is by no means probable that they

they should have learnt it in the deserts of Arabia Petræa.

Flavius Josephus, in his answers to Appion, Lyfimachus and Molon, book 2. chap v. acknowledges that it was the Egyptians who first taught other nations the practice of circumcision, as Herodotus likewise observes. And indeed it is not probable that the ancient and potent nation of the Egyptians should have adopted this custom from a petty people whom they held in abhorrence, and who, as they themselves acknowledge, did not begin to circumcise themselves till the time of Joshua.

The sacred writings themselves inform us, that Moses had imbibed the learning of the Egyptians, but no where do they say that the Egyptians learnt any thing of the Jews. When Solomon wanted to build his temple and palace, did not he apply to the king of Tyre for workmen? It is even said that he gave twenty cities to king Hiram, in order to obtain workmen and cedars; this indeed was paying dearly for them, and the bargain was a strange one. It does not appear that the Tyrians ever stood in need of Jewish artists.

The same Josephus whom we have already so often mentioned, acknowledges that his nation, which he takes every opportunity of extolling, had for a long time no commerce with any other, and that it was unknown to the Greeks who were acquainted with the Scythians and Tartars. "Can we wonder," says he, in the fifth chapter of his second book, "that our nation being remote from the sea, and not pretending to write any thing, should have been so little known?"

When Josephus relates with his usual exaggerations, the manner, no less honourable than incredible, in which king Ptolemy Philadelphus purchased a Greek translation of the Jewish books, made by certain Jews in the city of Alexandria, Josephus, I say, adds, that Demetrius Phalereus who caused this version to be made for the king his master's library, asked one of the translators how it had happened, that "No foreign historian or poet had ever spoken of the Jewish laws? The translator replied, as these laws are all of them divine, no person has ever dared to mention them, and those who have been inclined to do it, have been punished by God. Theopompus having attempted to introduce some part of them into his history, lost his understanding for forty days; but at length having discovered in a dream, that he was reduced to idiotism as a punishment, for having endeavoured to unfold divine mysteries, in order to display them to profane ages *, he appeased the wrath of God by his prayers, and was restored to his senses.

"Theodectes a Greek poet, having introduced into me of his tragedies, a few passages taken from our holy books, was immediately struck blind, nor did he recover his sight till he had acknowledged his fault."

These two tales of Josephus, which are unworthy of history, and of a writer who has common sense, do indeed contradict the praises he bestows on this Greek translation of the Jewish books; for if it was a crime to insert any part of them in another language, it was certainly a much

* *Josephus*, History of the Jews, book 12, chap. ii.

greater

greater crime to render them intelligible to all the Greeks. But at any rate, Josephus in relating these two little histories, evidently acknowledges that the Greeks had no knowledge of the Hebrew writings.

On the contrary, the Jews were no sooner established in Alexandria, than they began to apply themselves to the Greek literature, so that they were soon called the *Grecian Jews*. It is therefore indisputable, that from the time of Alexander, the Jews were indebted for many things to the Greeks, whose language was become that of Asia Minor, and of a part of Egypt, and that the Greeks could not have taken any thing from the Jews.

Of the Romans—Of the Establishment of their Empire and Religion—Of their Toleration.

THE Romans cannot be reckoned among the primitive nations. They are too recent. Rome did not exist more than seven hundred and fifty years before our vulgar æra. The Romans derived their laws and religious rites from the Tuscans and Greeks. They were indebted to the former of them for the superstition of their augurs, a superstition nevertheless, which was founded on the study of nature, witness the flights of birds, from which they foretold the changes of the atmosphere. Every superstition seems to have been derived from something natural, so that many errors have arisen from the abuse of what was originally founded on truth.

The Greeks furnished the Romans with the law of the twelve tables. A people who go to other nations for their laws and their gods, must naturally

rally have been petty and barbarous, and such indeed were the first Romans. Their territory at the time of their kings and first consuls, was not so extensive as that of Ragusa. By this title of king, we do not mean such monarchs as Cyrus and his successors. The chief of a petty plundering nation can never be despotic. The spoil is shared in common, and each individual defends his liberty as his own particular property. The first kings of Rome were like the captains of the Buccaneers.

If we are to believe the Roman historians, this petty people began with ravishing the daughters, and seizing on the possessions of their neighbours. They deserved to have been exterminated; but the ferocity and necessity which urged them to these acts of injustice rendered them successful. They were perpetually at war, and in the course of four centuries, being much more warlike than any of the other nations they had to contend with, they subdued them all one after the other, from the inmost borders of the Adriatic sea, to the Euphrates.

Amidst those scenes of rapine, a spirit of patriotism uniformly prevailed till the time of Sylla. This love of their country, consisted for more than four hundred years in bringing to the common stock, whatever had been taken from other nations. This was the virtue of robbers. They expressed their love for their country, by killing and plundering the rest of mankind. But in the bosom of the republic, there were many distinguished virtues. The Romans, who in time became a polished nation, civilized the barbarians they subdued, and at length were the legislators of the west.

The

The Greeks, in the early days of their republics, seem to have been a nation in every respect superior to the Romans. The latter never quitted their seven mountains, with their *manipuli** in their hands, but to plunder the neighbouring villages; whereas the former were solely employed in defending their liberties. The Romans were busied in robbing their neighbours the Æqui, the Volsci, and the Antiates, petty nations lying within a circuit of four or five miles. The Greeks repulsed the innumerable armies of the great king of Persia, and triumphed over him both by land and by sea. Those victorious Greeks cultivated and improved all the fine arts, which the Romans had no knowledge of, till about the time of Scipio Africanus.

Concerning the religion of the Romans, we may here make two important observations; one is, that like the Greeks, they adopted or tolerated the religion of every other nation; the other, that in the main, the senate and the emperors, like most of the Grecian philosophers and poets, acknowledged one supreme God.

The toleration of all religions was a natural law, engraven on the hearts of all mankind. For what right could a created being have, to oblige another being to think as he did? But when men are once collected into a body of people, and religion is become a law of the state, we must necessarily submit to that law. The Romans by their laws adopted all the gods of the Greeks; and even the latter, as we have already remarked, erected altars to the unknown gods.

* The *manipulus*, was a bundle of hay tied to the end of a pole, which the first Romans used instead of an ensign. T.

By the laws of the twelve tables, it was ordained, that no person should have strange and new gods without the sanction of the public, *separatim nemo habessit Deos neve advenas nisi publice adscitos*. This sanction was given to several religions; all the rest were tolerated. This association of all the divinities in the world, this kind of divine hospitality, constituted as it were the law of nations among all the ancients, if we except perhaps one or two petty people.

As they had no dogmas, so they had no religious wars. Blood enough was shed by ambition and rapine; there was no occasion for religion to assist in exterminating the human species.

It is moreover very remarkable, that among the Romans, from the time of Romulus to that of Domitian, no person was ever persecuted on account of his mode of thinking; and Socrates is the only instance of any such persecution among the Greeks.

It is likewise indisputable, that the Romans, like the Greeks, adored one supreme God. Their Jupiter was the only deity to whom they gave the name of *Deus optimus maximus*, and whom they considered as the master of the thunder. Thus, in all the ancient nations, from Italy to India and China, you find that one supreme God was worshipped, and all religions tolerated.

To this knowledge of a God, and to this universal indulgence, which are every where the effects of a cultivated understanding, they added a multitude of superstitions, which were the fruits of ancient errors, imbibed at the first dawn of reason. Every body knows that the sacred chicken, the goddess Pertunda, and the goddess Cloacina, were truly ridiculous.

It

It may be asked perhaps, how it happened that the conquerors and legislators of so many nations did not abolish those absurdities? The reason is because their antiquity rendered them dear to the common people, and they were no way prejudicial to government. The Scipios, the Paulus Emiliuses, the Ciceros, the Catos, and the Cæsars had something else to do than to oppose the superstitions of the populace. When an old error is established, government makes use of it as a bit which the common people themselves have put into their mouths, until another superstition comes and destroys it, and when this happens, administration takes advantage of this second error, in the same manner as it did of the first.

Questions concerning the Conquests of the Romans, and the Decline of their Empire.

HOW happened it, that the Romans, who at the time of Romulus were in possession only of a single town of a thousand paces in circumference, and containing only three thousand inhabitants, became in process of time the greatest conquerors upon earth? And what is the reason that the Jews, who pretend to have had six hundred and thirty thousand soldiers at their coming out of Egypt, who marched only in the midst of miracles, and who fought under the God of hosts, were never able to conquer Tyre and Sidon, though situated in their neighbourhood, or even to be at any time capable of attacking them? Why were these same Jews almost always in slavery? They possessed all the enthusiasm, and all the ferocity requisite to constitute conquerors; the Lord God of battles was always at their head; and yet it

was these Romans who were eighteen hundred miles apart from them, that at length came to subdue them, and sell them for slaves.

Is it not clear (humanly speaking, and considering only secondary causes) that if the Jews, who expected to conquer the world, were almost always in subjection, it was their own fault? And did not the courage and prudence of the Romans render them deserving of their conquests? I most humbly crave pardon of the Romans for comparing them a single moment with the Jews. How happened it that the Romans, during upwards of four hundred and fifty years, were able only to subdue a country of about five and twenty leagues in extent? Was it not because they were in a very inconsiderable number, and had successively to engage with petty nations like themselves? But at length, when they had incorporated their conquered neighbours with themselves, they had sufficient strength to oppose Pyrrhus.

All the petty nations that surrounded them being then become Romans, they together formed a warlike people, who were formidable enough to destroy Carthage.

Why were the Romans seven hundred years in procuring to themselves an empire nearly as vast as that which Alexander conquered in seven or eight years? Was it because they had to do with warlike nations, and Alexander only with effeminate ones?

Why was this empire at length destroyed by the barbarians? Were not those people more warlike and more robust than the Romans, who in their turns were enervated by their luxuries under Honorius and his successors? When the Cimbri came and threatened Italy at the time of Marius, the Romans

mans ought to have foreseen that the Cimbri, or in other words, the people of the North, would return and over-run the empire, when there would be no longer a Marius to oppose them.

The weakness of the emperors, the factions of their ministers and eunuchs, the hatred which the professors of the ancient religion of the empire conceived for those who adhered to the new, the bloody disputes that arose concerning christianity, the theological controversies that made men neglectful of military discipline, the effeminacy into which they were fallen, the multitude of monks, and the diminished number of husbandmen and soldiers, all concurred to favour the irruption of those barbarians, who had failed in their attack on the warlike republic, but who easily overpowered Rome in its languid state, under emperors who were cruel, voluptuous, and devout. When the Goths, the Heruli, the Vandals, and the Huns overspread the Roman empire, what measures did the two emperors adopt in order to avert the storm? The difference between the Omoosios and Omousios was a subject of dispute throughout the East and West. Religious persecutions completed the general ruin. Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, who was in great favour with Theodosius the Second, obtained leave of the emperor to persecute those who deemed it necessary to re-baptize the apostate christians who repented, those who were for celebrating Easter on the fourteenth day of the moon in March, and those who in baptism did not plunge the person baptized three times into the water; in a word, he tormented the christians so much, that they tormented him in their turn. He called the holy virgin *Antropotokos*; his enemies who were

for naming her *Theotokos*, and doubtless were in the right, since the council of Ephesus decided in their favour, persecuted him with great virulence. Every body thought themselves interested in these quarrels, and while they were disputing, the barbarians were making themselves masters of Europe and Africa.

But what is the reason that Alaric, who at the beginning of the fifth century marched from the borders of the Danube towards Rome, did not begin with attacking Constantinople, when he was master of Thrace? How came he to hazard the danger of being pressed in as it were between the empire of the East and that of the West? Is it natural to suppose that he could wish to pass the Alps and Apennines when Constantinople would have been so easy a conquest for him? The historians of those times, who were as badly informed as the people were badly governed, do not explain this mystery to us; but we may easily conjecture what were his motives on this occasion. Alaric had been general of an army under Theodosius the Second, an impetuous, devout, and imprudent prince, who lost the empire by intrusting his defence to the Goths. With their assistance he subdued his competitor Eugenius; but this success served to convince the Goths that they might conquer for themselves. Alaric and his Goths were in the pay of Theodosius; and this pay became a tribute when Arcadius, the son of Theodosius, was on the throne of the East. Alaric therefore spared this prince and fell upon Honorius and Rome.

The general who commanded Honorius's troops at that time, was the celebrated Stilicon, the only person who was capable of defending Italy,

Italy, and who had already checked the efforts of the barbarians. Honorius, upon some slight suspicions, ordered his head to be struck off without even the form of a trial. It was much easier to assassinate Stilicon than to defeat Alaric. This worthless emperor retiring to Ravenna suffered the barbarian, who was superior to him in every thing, to lay siege to Rome. The ancient mistress of the world, was redeemed from pillage at the price of five thousand pounds weight of gold, thirty thousand of silver, four thousand robes of silk, three thousand of purple, and three thousand pounds weight of spices. Thus the commodities of India were employed in the ransom of Rome.

Honorius refused to ratify the treaty. He sent some few troops against Alaric who were soon exterminated. That barbarian marched to Rome in 409, and there created an emperor who became his first subject. The year after, having been deceived by Honorius, he punished him by sacking Rome. Then it was that the empire of the West was completely overpowered; the inhabitants of the North poured into it on every side, and the emperors preserved themselves only by becoming tributary, of which we have an instance in Theodosius the Second, who paid tribute to Attila. Italy, Gaul, Spain and Africa were an easy prey to any one who was disposed to attack them. All this was the fruit of Constantine's mistaken politics in removing the Roman empire to Thrace.

Is there not evidently a destiny that determines the rise and the fall of states? Any one who should have told Augustus, that the capitol would one day be in the possession of a priest, whose

whose religion was derived from that of the Jews, would have greatly surprized that emperor. It will be asked perhaps, how this priest could make himself master of the city of the Scipios and Cæsars; and we may reply that it was, because he found it in anarchy. He gradually and without any great difficulty got possession of it, in the same manner as the German bishops, towards the thirteenth century, became the sovereigns of those districts, of which they were before only the pastors.

Every event leads to another that is perfectly unexpected. Romulus did not imagine he was founding Rome either for Gothic princes, or for bishops. Alexander could not suppose that Alexandria would one day belong to the Turks; and Constantine certainly did not mean to build Constantinople for Mahomet the Second.

Of the first People that wrote History, and of the Fables of the First Historians.

IT is incontestable that the most ancient annals in the world are those of China. These annals, which include an uninterrupted series of four thousand one hundred and fifty years, are all corroborated by astronomical observations, and related in a plain and accurate manner without any mixture of the marvellous. They even ascend several centuries higher, without any exact dates indeed, but with that appearance of truth which seems to be almost equal to certainty. It is very probable that other powerful nations, such as the Indians, Egyptians, Chaldæans and Syrians who had great cities, had likewise their annals.

A wander-

A wandering people must necessarily be the last who have a written history, because they have less means than others of procuring archives or of preserving them, and because they have fewer wants, fewer laws, and fewer events. They are solicitous only to obtain a precarious subsistence, and an oral tradition is sufficient for them. A village never had its history; a wandering people still less, a single city very rarely.

The history of a nation can never be written till very late; they begin with a few summary registers, which are preserved as well as they can be in a temple or in a citadel. An unfortunate war often destroys these annals, and then they have to begin again, twenty times perhaps, like the ants whose nest has been trodden under our feet; it is not till after several centuries that any sort of history can be formed from these undigested registers, and this first history constantly partakes of the false and the marvellous, with which they attempt to replace the truth that is deficient. Thus the Greeks had not their Herodotus till the eightieth olympiad, which was more than a thousand years after the first epocha mentioned in the Parian inscriptions. Fabius Pictor, the most ancient Roman historian, did not write till the second Punic war, which was about five hundred and forty years after the foundation of Rome.

Now if these two nations, the Greeks and Romans, our masters, who were the most polished people upon earth, began their history so late, and if our northern nations had no historian before Gregory of Tours, can it be supposed that the hordes of wandering Tartars who sleep upon the snow, or the savages who hide themselves in caverns, or the plundering Arabs who dwell
amidst

amidst sandy deserts, have had their Thucydides or their Xenophons? Can they possibly know any thing of their ancestors? Can they acquire any knowledge before they have towns or settled habitations, and before they have called in the arts to which they at present are strangers?

If the Samoyedes, the Ilinese, or the Esquimaux were to come and shew us annals dated several hundred years ago, and filled with wonderful deeds of arms and a continual series of prodigies, should we not smile at those poor savages? And if any persons fond of the marvellous, or interested in making them believed, were to torture their imaginations in order to render these absurdities probable, should we not ridicule their efforts? And if to this folly they were to join the insolence of affecting to despise men of learning, and the cruelty of persecuting those who doubted, would they not be the most execrable of men? If a Siamese comes and tells me of the metamorphoses of Sammonocodom, and threatens to burn me if I doubt the truth of them, what am I to say him?

The Roman historians do indeed inform us, that the god Mars had two sons by a vestal virgin at a time when there were no such virgins in Italy; that these two children were suckled by a she-wolf; that Castor and Pollux fought for the Romans; that Curtius threw himself into a gulph which immediately closed; but the Roman senate never condemned any one to death for doubting the truth of these prodigies; they permitted them to be laughed at in the capitol.

There are several events in the Roman history, which though very possible, are by no means probable.

bable. Several learned men have doubted whether there is any truth in the adventure of the geese which saved Rome, or in that of Camillus, who is said to have totally destroyed an army of Gauls. The victory of Camillus shines greatly it is true in Livy; but Polybius who was a more ancient writer and more of a statesman than Livy, says precisely the contrary; he assures us, that the Gauls being apprehensive of an attack from the Veneti, set out from Rome loaded with plunder after having made peace with the Romans. Which of the two are we to believe, Livy or Polybius? At least we shall doubt.

What are we to think of the punishment of Regulus, who is said to have been shut up in a box armed within side with iron spikes? This kind of death is certainly singular. How happens it that this same Polybius, who was nearly cotemporary, who was upon the spot, and who has written the History of the War between Rome and Carthage in so superior a manner, makes no mention of a fact so extraordinary and important, and which would so clearly have justified the infincerity, with which the Romans acted towards the Carthaginians? How could these people dare to violate the law of nations so barbarously in the treatment of Regulus, at a time when many of the principal inhabitants of Carthage were in the hands of the Romans? In short, Diodorus Siculus relates, in one of his Fragments, that Regulus's children having ill-treated some of the Carthaginian prisoners, the Roman senate reprimanded them and vindicated the law of nations. But is it not probable that if Regulus had been assassinated at Carthage, they would have allowed his sons to take their revenge? The history of Re-

gulus's punishment gained credit after a time, the hatred against Carthage tended to establish it, and when Horace had introduced it in one of his odes *, every doubt was removed.

If we throw our eyes over the earlier parts of the history of France, we shall perhaps find them as false as they are obscure and disgusting; at least it is very difficult to believe the adventures of Childeric, of Bazina, wife of a certain Bazin, and of a Roman captain, who was chosen king of the Franks, at a time when those people knew not what it was to have a king.

Gregory of Tours is our Herodotus, with this difference only, that he is less entertaining and less elegant than the Greek. But were the monks who wrote after Gregory's time more enlightened or of greater veracity? Did they not sometimes lavish the most extravagant praises on assassins, who had given those lands? And did not they as often abuse wise and prudent princes, who had given them nothing?

It is certain that the Franks, who invaded Gaul, were much more cruel than the Lombards who made themselves masters of Italy, or than the Visigoths who reigned in Spain. We find as many murders, as many assassinations in the annals of Clovis, Thierry, Childebert, Chilperic and Clotharius, as in those of the kings of Israel and Judah. Nothing can be more savage than those barbarous times; and yet we may be allowed to call in question the punishment of queen Brunehaut.

She was eighty years of age when she died in 613 or 614. Fredegaire, who wrote towards the

* Lib. iii. Ode v,

close of the eighth century, an hundred and fifty years after the death of queen Brunchaut, assures us, that king Clotharius, a pious, humane, patient, and well-disposed prince, after ordering queen Brunehaut to be carried upon a camel around his camp, caused her to be fastened by her hair, and by one arm, and one leg, to the tail of an unruly horse, who drew her alive upon the high road, beat her head upon the stones, and tore her in pieces, after which, she was burnt and reduced to ashes. This camel, this unruly horse, and a queen eighty years old, fastened by her hair and her foot to the tail of the latter, are by no means very common circumstances.

It would perhaps be somewhat difficult to make the hair of a woman of that age hold to a horses tail, or to tie her to it by one of her feet as well as by her hair. And how are we to explain the pious manner in which they interred Brunehaut, at Autun, after having burnt her in a camp? That this was done, we are told by the monks Fredegair and Aimon, but are these monks to be considered as de Tous or Humes?

There was a tomb erected to this queen in the fifteenth century, in St. Martin's Abbey at Autun, of which she was the founder. In this sepulchre, part of a spur has been found, which is said to have been the spur that was applied to the horse employed in her execution. But is it not possible that this spur might have been put there through inadvertence, or rather as a token of distinction? In the fifteenth century, a gilt spur was a great mark of honour. In a word, is it not rational to suspend our judgment on this strange adventure, which is so badly related? Pasquier it

is true, tells us that queen Brunehaut's death had been predicted by the Sybil.

All those ages of barbarism were ages of prodigies and horror. But are we to believe every thing the monks have written? They were almost the only persons who could read and write, at a time when Charlemagne could not sign his name. They have handed down to us the date of some great events. We believe with them, that Charles Martel routed the Saracens, but that he killed three hundred and sixty thousand of them in the battle, is in truth rather too much.

They tell us that Clovis the second became insane; the thing is not impossible; but that God thus afflicted his brain as a punishment for his having carried away one of St. Denis's arms from the church belonging to those monks, in order to place it in his own chapel, is far from being so probable.

If we had only such tales as these to encounter, in the history of France, or rather in the history of the Frank kings and their mayors, we might strive to read it. But the gross falsehoods with which it abounds, are intolerable. We find the historians continually besieging towns and fortresses that had no existence. All the towns beyond the Rhine were without walls, and defended only by palisadoes and ditches, till the time of Henry the Fowler, about the year 920. In a word, almost all the accounts we have of those times, are so many fables, and what is worse, insipid fables.

Of the Legislators who have spoken in the Name of the Gods.

EVERY profane legislator who pretended that his laws had been dictated to him by the Divinity, was evidently a blasphemer and a traitor; a blasphemer, because he abused the name of God, a traitor, because he subjected his country to his own opinions. There are two sorts of laws, the one natural, common, and useful to all, the other political. "Thou shalt neither murder nor injure thy neighbour; thou shalt carefully respect thy father and thy mother; thou shalt not ravish thy brother's wife; thou shalt not lie for the sake of injuring him; thou shalt assist him in his wants, that thou mayest deserve to be assisted by him in thy turn." These are laws that nature has engraved on every heart, from one end of the world to the other. Neither Orpheus, Hermes, Minos, Lycurgus or Numa, had occasion for Jupiter to announce these well-founded truths to mankind.

If I had found myself near one of those great impostors in an assembly of the people, I would have cried out to him, "Hold, do not thus calumniate the Deity; if you bring him down from heaven to teach us what we all know, you are contriving to deceive us, and to make him subservient to your own purpose; you want to take advantage of our belief of these truths, in order to favour your usurpation; I therefore charge you in the face of the people, with being a blasphemous tyrant."

The other sort of laws, or the political, are arbitrary, and incessantly varying; sometimes
I
establishing

establiſhing ephori *, and ſometimes conſuls ; *comitia centuriata*, or *comitia tributa* † ; an *areopagus* ‡ , or a ſenate ; an ariſtocracy, a democracy or a monarchy. It would evince but little knowledge of the human heart, to ſuſpect that a profane legiſlator could ever poſſibly eſtabliſh any one of theſe political laws in the name of God, but with a view to his own intereſt.

But it will be aſked perhaps, whether all the profane legiſlators were knaves deſerving of the gallows ? No ; in the ſame manner as at preſent there are amongſt our magiſtrates many men of a virtuous and patriotic way of thinking, who propoſe things uſeful to ſociety, without boaſting of their having been revealed to them ; ſo among the legiſlators of former ages, there were ſome who inſtituted admirable laws, without attributing them either to Jupiter or Minerva. Such was the Roman ſenate, which gave laws to Europe, to Aſia Minor, and to Africa, without deceiving them ; and ſuch within our memories was Peter the Great, who might have impoſed on his ſubjects with greater facility, than Hermes did on the Ægyptians, Minos on the Cretans, or Zamolxis on the ancient Scythians.

* Theſe were magiſtrates of the Lacedæmonians, who were commonly five in number. T.

† The *comitia*, among the Romans, were aſſemblies of the people for chooſing officers, or making bye-laws. They were called *centuriata*, when the people gave their votes by hundreds, and *tributa*, when by tribes. T.

‡ The *areopagus* was a court inſtituted by Solon, at Athens, and was compoſed of twelve judges. It took its name from its ſituation on Mars's Hill. (*Ἀρειος πάγος*.) T.

E R R A T A.

Page 306, of the Preliminary Discourse, for 'Origines,' read 'Origenes.'

Vol. I. Of the Essay on the Manners, &c. of Nations, page 92, line 3, from the top, for *Lin* read *Linus*.

Page 99, 16th line, and page 99, 7th line from the bottom, for 'Evangelist,' read 'Gospel.'

II. P. 53, 17th line from the bottom, for 'defending' read 'forbidding.'

III, Page 69, for 'reckoned to march,' read 'purposed to march.'

